

PC PowerPlay
G.O.T.Y.
11CDD
DOG SWAMP
NEWS & POST OFFICE
\$8.95

GAME OF THE YEAR - VOTE AND YOU COULD WIN A DIAMOND 3DFX!

PC PowerPlay

THE AUSTRALIAN PC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

Plus GAMES CD ROM



AGE OF EMPIRES

Civilization discovers Warcraft

500MHZ PENTIUMS

**Intel's gaming monsters revealed
Win 98- good for games?**

LANDS OF LORE II STARFLEET ACADEMY

BEAM SOFTWARE
Aussie gaming pioneers

SOFTWARE PIRACY
Why it's not cool anymore

ON THE CD:



COMMAND & CONQUER 3
Bungeon Keeper
Cricket 97
Constructor
Ignition

ISSUE 17 October 1997 \$8.95 NZ \$11.95 inc. GST



Red Baron

The Best-Selling World War I Dogfighting Simulation Returns!



OFFICE OF FILM AND LITERATURE CLASSIFICATION



GENERAL

(8 YEARS & OVER)

LOW LEVEL

ANIMATED VIOLENCE

Windows 95
CD ROM

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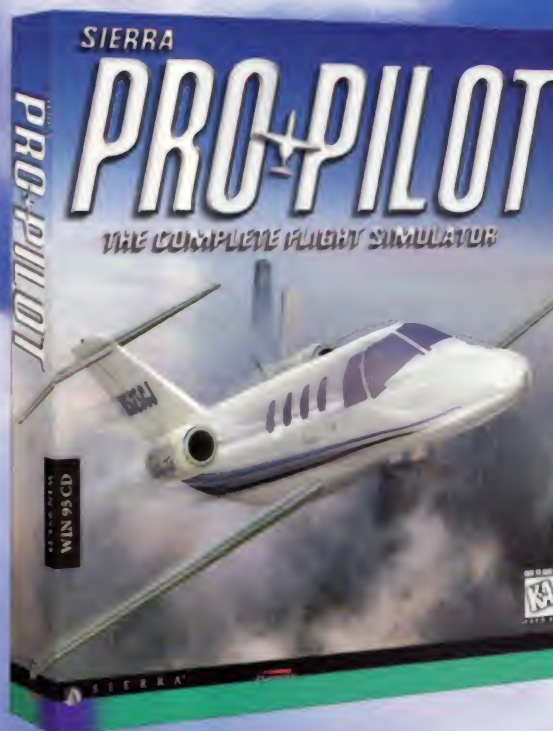


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LANDING SOON

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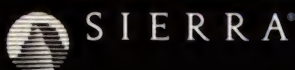
Dynamix

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IT'S GOT MORE OF WHAT YOU
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What we're playing: Age of Empires, X-Car, Ignition,
 Moto Racer, Starfleet Academy, Master of Orion 2,
 X-Com Apocalypse, Hexen II demo, MacQuake (!),
 Abe's Oddysee.



Editorial



Christmas is coming! Cool new games are coming! Christmas is coming! Apart from the bothersome inconvenience of having to dedicate an entire day to non-gaming, Christmas is a happy, bountiful season for gamers.

Firstly there's the time off. I'm not looking forward to that at all... Ha ha! With all the big games coming out it's just not possible to play them with the respect they deserve over a weekend, a few weeknights or the occasional sickie. Nope. You need at least a week. A week where your sleep patterns undergo major recalibration. The old "one more turn at 3 o'clock in the morning" witty anecdote becomes real. Then dawn. But who cares? It does.

n't matter! Play for 48 hours straight if you want! Yay the holidays! Almost here, almost here... Me? I'm out of bed at about 7 in the morning, fire the machine up, hit the toaster, coffee, a brief shower out of consideration for my flatties then it's playtime until about 2-3am. That's how you get to be editor you see. Have no life and care more about games than normal, healthy, boy-type stuff.

Then there's the games. As is always the way, all the games you really looked forward to the most will be delayed until June next year. That's cool, we know it's going to happen, we're prepared for it emotionally. There are heaps of games left over though. More than enough to get into big time. Some will suck, but hey, keep reading PowerPlay and you'll get the best consumer advice \$8.95 can buy.

Ben

The PC PowerPlay scoring system

90%+ A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre, or a ground breaking game that'll be setting trends.

80-90% A strong, eminently playable game. Hard to fault and likely to still be on the hard drive in 6 months time.

60-80% B Competant and generally enjoyable. Flaws or mediocrity hold these games back from higher ratings.

40-60% C Average and ordinary. Not bad, not good. Ideal gift

0-40% D Bad, really bad. Boring, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible



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Heaps of games to play, here's how.

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Promising more gameplay and less FMV, Wing Commander 5 looks to be a return to the glory days of Wing 1 & 2.

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A pretty good looking game, an insanely funny interview. Don't miss this!

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An "Ohmigod" class of game, the graphics, the gameplay, the internet support... We want it now!

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News from inside the biggest virtual world ever created.

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Lands of Lore 2, Age of Empires, Star Trek Academy, Enemy Nations, Birth Rite, Cricket 97: Ashes Edition, Great Battles of Alexander, iF-22, F-16 Fighting Falcon, Atlantis, Mass Destruction, Terracide, Extreme Assault, Hardcore 4x4, Pacific General, The Ardennes Offensive, Dragon Dice, Aaron vs. Ruth.



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Everyone has an opinion. PowerPlay readers especially. Here's what people like you think. Reassuring eh? Plus Freak Of The Month. Be very afraid.

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Possibly the oldest game we've had in Flashback so far, this masterpiece of strategy gaming got an entire generation hooked on computer games.

CD GUIDE

Comanche 3



Welcome to this month's cover CD, where every effort has been taken to get the latest demos and shareware games to you. Recently you may have noticed a slight change with the menu options on the CD. Here's why. Basically, we're trying to make the cover CD use as little as your computer's resources as possible. Where possible, we're aiming to make the demo run from the CD. Those of you however that have slower machines might be inconvenienced by this method. To rectify this, we've added an Installation option to copy the demo from the CD to your hard drive.

So, if you try a game, and it runs off the CD too slowly, or sound doesn't work etc. Try using the Install function to copy it to your hard drive. If the unthinkable happens and the Install procedure fails, note the title of each game in this guide. The 3rd line lists the directory the game is located on the CD to make it easier for you to manually copy.

Comanche 3

Nova Logic
Dos Flight Simulator
\\dos\\c3

Comanche 3, the latest sequel to the best-selling Comanche series. Based on authentic Boeing and Sikorsky (manufacturers of the Comanche) documentation, Comanche 3 offers an accurate flight model, realistic sounds such as Pilot chatter and digitised sounds of a real Comanche in flight in Dolby Surround Sound even. System Requirements: Pentium

100, 16MB RAM, Sound card.

This game supports a Joypad/Joystick, Stereoscopic 3D Glasses, VR-1 Headset.

Cricket 97 Demo

Electronic Arts
Windows 95 Sports Simulation
\\crig97

Whether you like watching cricket or not, it makes for an excellent computer game. The mix of strategy, i.e. do I run or not? + field positions and working a team together to get the ball back in is thoroughly enjoying. Love the game or hate it, give the computer game a go, it's a lot of fun. System requirements: Pentium, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game is controlled by keyboard (full version supports joystick and mouse).

Tab - Adjust game mode (Easy, Medium, Hard - The game defaults to easy mode.)

Ctrl - hit the ball (Direction Optional)

Ctrl + Alt - hit the ball harder. (Direction optional)

Directions are mapped to the numeric keypad:

Dungeon Keeper Demo

Bullfrog (Electronic Arts)
Windows 95 Real Time Strategy
\\dkeep95

Dungeon Keeper is a game infamous for its constantly slipping release date, and its dramatically changed gameplay. DK is a real time strategy game, but none like

you've ever played before. The emphasis is on building an efficiently evil dungeon as opposed to military tactics with monsters. A very popular game, some people find the gameplay irresistible. System Requirements :Pentium 60, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. DirectX 3+. This game is controlled by the mouse.

Blast Doors

Shareware
Windows 95 Cannon game
\\blast

Ground Zero is another in the classic series of 'cannon' games that stretch back to the dawn of computing. The programmer inspired by 'Scorched Earth'. Wanted to add more than just the two-dimensional side view. Blast Doors now places the cannon game in 3 Dimensions utilising bearing as well as angle and charge. It also includes Internet play. System requirements: 486 DX 2/66, 8Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game is controlled with the mouse.

DirectX 5.0

Microsoft
Windows 95 System driver
\\dx50

Yes, this should be in the Utilities section, but we wanted to make sure that no-one missed it! DirectX 5.0, this is what we've all been waiting for. Is it faster? Is it better? Is it more stable! Yes, Yes and Yes. Install it quick!
System Requirements : Win 95.

Emperor of the Fading Suns Demo.

Windows 95 Strategy
\\efs

In Emperor of the Fading Suns you control one of the Five Noble Houses, each trying to command enough votes to be crowned Emperor of the Known Worlds. You must deal with complex politics as different factions try to force their own agenda and gain favour with the more powerful noble houses. War, treachery, and trade all combine to

CD Tech

Win 95

Running the Powerplay CD under Win 95 is best. All the games will appear on the menu and run, whether Win 95 or DOS.

CLICK ON THE POWERWIN ICON

DOS

Around half the games are DOS. The Powerplay DOS menu will only show DOS games

TYPE PCPOWER AT THE CD PROMPT (PROBABLY D:)

Win 3.1x

Some games will run under Win3.1x. The Powerplay menu won't work under Win3.1x, so run them straight from the CD with File Manager

RUN STRAIGHT FROM CD

make EFS a grand strategy game within a science fiction (Dune) style setting which offers a unique feel. System Requirements: Pentium 60, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. DirectX 3+. This game is controlled by the mouse.

Esoteria

Moebius
Windows 95 - Action shooter
\\esodemo

Esoterica is a 3rd person perspective shooter. Just to add that little twist to the 1st person genre. You now see your character from your own 1st person with the play character in the third person (from your 1st person that is). Confused yet? It's just like a 1st person perspective shooter, except you can see your character in front of you. Doom style graphics, but fully explorable 3D buildings. System Requirements : Pentium 60, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. DirectX 3+ This game is controlled by the mouse.

e = move forward

d = move backwards

s = slide to the right

f = slide to the left

Space = jump (the longer the key is held down, the higher the jump)

a = crouch

q = toggle item selection forward

z = toggle item selection backwards

r = use the currently selected item

g = open doors, push buttons, and

Dungeon Keeper



other environment interactions
b and t = toggle weapons up & down
1 = equip the ARC Blade
2 = equip the ARC
6 = equip missiles
7 = equip homing missiles
c = toggle laser targeting dot on and off

CAPS LOCK = toggle between running and walking mode

TAB = toggles display of on-screen statistics (#items found, #secrets found, #enemies killed)

< and > = scales radar in and out

x = zoom out

v = zoom in

x + v = Completely un-zoom.

**** Note:** Raven cannot zoom while running or walking

+ = increase the viewport size

= = decrease the viewport size

f4 = toggle between low-res and hi-res screen

ESC = go to the main interface screen

MOUSE ACTIONS

Forward = look down

Backward = look up

Right = turn right

Left = turn left

Left Button = fires Raven's equipped weapon

Right Button = allows camera orientation to be independent of Raven's facing direction. Push and hold down to enter free camera movement mode. Release to go back to normal camera function.

Ignition Demo

UDS

Windows 95 Racing

\igntn

Ignition places you across exotic countries and punishing race tracks to conquer a variety of other vehicles in a complete 3D world. It may be a racing game, but pit stops and aerodynamic car design isn't the way to win these races. Instead, tactics such as ramming someone off a 200ft cliff are the sure road to winning.

System Requirements: Pentium 75MHz 16MB, CD-ROM, Soundcard. This game supports a Joypad/Joystick

Mordor 2

Windows (3.1 - 95)

Adventure/RPG

\mordor2

According to the opinions of people on the Net, Mordor is one of the greatest RPGs ever made accumulating quite a cult following. Now Mordor 2 is out and the cultists are thrilled. An RPG that has more statistics than you'd know what to do with. RPG Die-

Hards enjoy.

System Requirements : 486, 8MB, CD-ROM, Soundcard. This game is controlled with the mouse.

PGA Tour Golf Pro

Electronic Arts

Windows 95 Sports Simulation

\pga

There almost seems to be as many golf games as there are Doom clones... EA Sports' latest golf game offers a total 3D environment, and Internet play.

System Requirements : Pentium 100, 16MB, Soundcard. This game is controlled with the mouse.

Microsoft Puzzles pack

Microsoft

Windows 95 Puzzle

\puzzle

Featuring games by Alexey Pajitnov, the Russian mastermind behind Tetris, the Microsoft Puzzle pack has the potential to be painfully addictive. The puzzle are all strong and addictive, you can tell Alexy had his hand in it!

System Requirements : Pentium 60, 8MB, Soundcard. This game is controlled with the mouse.

SKrap

Neuronware

Windows 95 Action

\skrap

SKrap places you inside a futuristic chopper, hover vehicle - it's never really made quite clear actually. Anyway, the object is to fly around and destroy everything that moves, or shoots.

"SKRAP is an action game. One of the primary goals of the development process was to produce a truly gripping action experience. You will find SKRAP an extreme challenge. It is a nasty game, one that will take you many, many hours to defeat. Make no mistake: SKRAP is about GAMEPLAY. Only the truly skilled will survive and for that we make no apologies."

System Requirements Pentium 100, 16MB, Soundcard.

This game supports a Joypad/Joystick, 3Dfx, Rendition, D3D compatible devices.

Star Trek: Secret of Vulcan Fury

Interplay

Windows 95 trailer

\sovf

Sit back and enjoy one of the best computer generated animations of



virtual actors to date.

System Requirements : Pentium 90, 16MB, Soundcard.

Achtung Spitfire Demo

Big Time software

Windows (3.1 - 95) Turn based strategy

\spitfire\aspdemo

Achtung Spitfire is a turn-based strategy game of air combat over western Europe during the first half of World War Two, 1939-1943, with special emphasis on the classic Battle of Britain in 1940.

You can fight single air battles, fly historical missions, or serve an entire tour of duty (tours of duty are disabled in the demo). Take command of one fighter in a dog-fight or a whole squadron of front-line airplanes through the early years of the war.

All of the pilots and airplanes under your command have unique skills and characteristics that affect how they fly in combat. In the campaign, you select the pilots and weapons and make coordinated battle plans. You choose the tactical manoeuvres in swirling dogfights. This is not a flight simulator: you do not need fast reflexes with a joystick. All you need is tactical smarts.

System Requirements: Pentium 60, 16MB, Soundcard. This game is controlled with the mouse.

Stratagem

WareZ

Windows 95 Real time Strategy

\strat

'Stratagem' is a multi-player Internet game in which you lead your army through ever greater battles in the constant struggle to be the best.

As a semi-realtime game, 'Stratagem' is designed to eliminate the impact of network lag on gameplay and can run up to thirty-two players at once on a single map. The command method is simple, making it instantly playable (although there are cunning shortcuts and tactics which players will easily master after only a few games) and its vast diversity of troops, strategies and scenarios lend it an originality and lasting



appeal which makes it unique amongst other Internet games.

System Requirements: Pentium 60, 16MB, Soundcard, 28.8

Modem with access to the Net. This game is controlled with the mouse.

Sand Warriors Demo

Interplay

Windows 95 Action

\swdemo

Sand Warriors is novel in that it blends ancient Egyptian iconography with futuristic hyper-technology all in a fast SVGA graphics engine. The story goes like this, two warring nations are locked in genocidal war on the dying planet of Tawy. The prize is the right to discover the Orion technology needed to colonise the mysterious desert planet. Why they can't just work together for the common goal though is a point I suppose is best ignored. A cool 3D shoot-em-up with an Egyptian theme.

System Requirements : 486-DX50, 16MB of RAM, Sound card. This game supports a Joypad/Joystick, Forte VFX 1, Virtual IO-glasses, 3Dmax.

ENTER = Set speed to max

BACKSPACE = Safe speed

0 = Zero speed

+ = Increase speed

= = Decrease speed

J = Increase speed at a high rate

[= Decrease speed at a high rate

A = Increase speed at a high rate

Z = Decrease speed at a high rate

TAB = Afterburner

L = Toggle main lights on/off

T = Target Craft

R = Radar zoom facility

P = Pause game

C = Toggle cockpit (4 modes)

ALT = Engage auxiliary thrusters

CTRL = Fire

Terra 2120

Kaon

Windows 95 Multiplayer

Action

\tera2120

Terra 2120 is a Multiplayer tank game to compete with Sony's Tanarus. One of the more intriguing aspects of this game though is its support of 3D accelerators and very high compression. In Observe



mode, it's like watching TV!
8 = to raise the gun and view
2 = to lower the gun and view
4 = to turn turret and view left
6 = to turn turret and view right
7 = to zoom in on map
1 = to zoom out on map
9 = to raise throttle
3 = to lower throttle
5 = to fire current weapon at reticle
0 = to scavenge from other tanks
. = to switch reverse gear
/ = to switch elevations on map
***** = to switch viewport magnification
- = to switch IFF
+ = to clear radio display
Num lock = to switch map on HUD and console

Take No Prisoners Demo

Red Orb Entertainment
 Windows 95 Action
 \tnp

This demo contains one of the 20 territories from Take No Prisoners, another 3rd person perspective action game. In addition to the single player level, this demo also includes an IPX network only version of Kill At Will, frag fest for up to eight players. In addition to IPX, the full retail version will support direct connect, modem to modem, and TCP/IP multiplayer connections.

System Requirements : Pentium 90, 24MB of RAM, Sound card. This game supports a Joypad/Joystick, 3Dfx

Wild Ride

Run and Gun
 Windows 95 - Sports Sim
 \wride

Grad your board and peroxide dude cos' you're off to hit the surf.... man. Anyone who remembers the cool surf game out of "California Games" by Epyx many moons ago will be pleased with a modern

updated Surfing simulation in a fun, not serious light.
 System Requirements : Pentium 60, 16MB RAM, Sound card. This game supports a Joypad/Joystick, 3Dfx, D3D Accelerator.

Constructor

Acclaim
 Dos Real time Strategy
 \dos\cn

In Constructor, it's not the military at your disposal, but a bunch of thugs with British accents! The idea of the game is to build a successful, sustaining neighbourhood consisting of factories and houses among other things.

There's also competition that you need to harass as well before they crush your little empire. You must fill your homes with tenants and your factories with workers, and keep your tenants happy. You must do so within the time and land usage constraints set down by the Council. Ultimately, it's the Council that determines how well you are doing.

System Requirements : Pentium 60, 16MB RAM, Sound card. This game is controlled with the mouse.

Continuum Demo

Intuitive Impulse Software
 Dos Adventure
 \dos\cntin15b

The year is 1997. At the AREA 51 secret research facility in Nevada, a project, code-named CONTINUUM is nearing the final stages of completion. Using technology recovered from the 1947 UFO crash at Roswell, New Mexico, the secret bureau of the CIA, the elusive Section 7 has created a device that could destroy the fabric of the space-time continuum, disrupting the universe as we know it today... This adventure is unique because it

has been written by two High-School Grad students as a Computing Science project, and also as an attempt to create a game that could stand on its own merit of story and detail without relying on violence or other shallow content.

System Requirements : 486 DX 2/66, 8MB RAM, Sound card.

Up = Forward
Down = Backwards
Left = Turn Left
Right = Turn Right
Space = Open/Use.

Powball

Dos Arcade
 \dos\powball

Ever Remember Arkanoid, well this is similar but with a number of new functions. You still hit a ball with your paddle and knock away bricks until the screen is cleared whilst trying to keep at least one ball. But now you can play Simultaneous 2 player mode, Built-in level editor, 24 different enemies and 15 powerups, plus a Weapon shop with over 10 different weapons. Plain ol' good fun!
 System Requirements : 486 DX 2/66, 8MB RAM, Sound card. This game is controlled with the mouse.

Slam and Jam

Crystal Dynamics
 Dos Sports
 \dos\slamdmo

A complete conversion from the same game from the Sony Playstation, Slam and Jam focuses more on acrobatic slams then a serious basketball sim. Which is great. Fast paced with good (but interlaced on slower machine) graphics, the PC is quickly becoming a more rounded games machine.

System Requirements: Pentium 75, 16MB RAM, Sound card. This game supports a Joypad/ Joystick.

Move player up = **UP ARROW**
 Move player down = **DOWN ARROW**
 Move player left = **LEFT ARROW**
 Move player right = **RIGHT ARROW**
***Steal** = **RIGHT SHIFT**
Pass = **SPACEBAR**



Shoot/Jump = **ENTER**

Pick = **N**

Isolate = **M**

*Turbo (special jumps & speed bursts) = **,** (**comma**)

PAUSE = **ESC**

*Steal and Turbo actions are only available in COMPLEX CONTROL mode.

Note - Use **CONFIGURE CONTROLS** to reconfigure the default controls.

Super Mario

Dos Arcade Platform
 \dos\smario

The original SNES Super Mario has been totally converted to the PC. If you liked the original platformer, give this a try.

System Requirements : 486, 8MB RAM, Sound card.

Star Command Revolution

Dos Real Time Strategy
 \dos\starcom

Star Command Revolution, is a real-time space strategy game that allows you to manage resources, build spacecraft, learn new technologies, and most importantly - engage in real-time battles throughout the cosmos.

As one of four races navigating through space, players must strategically utilise mining droids to harvest resources to build offensive/defensive spacecraft, and universities to gain more advanced technology. Once you're built up, it's time to explore new areas of space while battling hostile forces, defeating interstellar bosses, gaining new technologies and freeing other races bound in slavery by evil cosmic warlords.

System Requirements : 486, 8MB RAM, Sound card. This game is controlled with the mouse.

Tennis Elbow

Goto Software
 Dos Sports Sim
 \dos\tennisus

Tennis Elbow continues the tradition of the computer tennis game (the logical follow on from Pong). Although all tennis games are fairly similar, Tennis Elbow has a much nicer implementation with smooth player movements, good rallies and precision shots.

System Requirements : 486, 8MB RAM, Sound card. This game supports a Joystick/Gamepad.

Up = Forward

Down = Backwards

Left = Move Left

Right = Move Right

CTRL (Left/Right) = Hit ball high to the left/right court.

CTRL + UP (Left/Right) = Hit ball low to left/right court.

CTRL + DOWN (Left/Right) = Hit ball high/far to left/right court.

CTRL + SHIFT (Left Right) = Hit ball hard and fast left/right court.

CTRL + SHIFT + UP (Left Right) = Lob ball just over net to left/right court.

CTRL + SHIFT + DOWN (Left Right) = Hit ball very high/far to left/right court.

Vendor 3

Dos RPG

\dos\vendor3

An RPG in the style of the old Bards tale or Lands of Lore. Paltivar, the Dark soul being from the first 2 Yendors has escaped whatever magical thingamajiggy was holding and captive and has returned to do bad things (ie. Reign of terror) to the townsfolk once again. To ensure another sequel, make sure you don't actually kill him, just banish him somewhere else!

System Requirements: 486, 8MB RAM, Sound card. This game is controlled with the mouse.

Utilities

ReadFlex Readflex will allow to achieve all those Speed reading skills you always wanted. With the advent of the Net and such apps as IRC etc, speed reading isn't too shallow a skill to have.

Brain Stormer BrainStormer is software designed to help you generate lots of creative ideas and then determine which idea is most suitable. Ideal for: Creative problem solving, Devising new product ideas, Creating new corporate strategies, Establishing personal or corporate goals, Next time you're stuck in that adventure game, give this a go.

Emergency Recovery System By using ERS, Windows system files are backed-up and you are able to restore them (including the Windows Registry). The ERS Backup is done from the Windows environment, but the restore must be done from the Command prompt only (DOS outside Windows).

The files that ERS creates backups from are: System.dat, User.dat, System.ini, Win.ini, Command.com, MSDOS.sys, IO.sys, Protocol.ini, Autoexec.bat, Config.sys, Dosstart.bat. A restore from fresh backup to system files will not create adverse behaviour, you can actually play

around and restore from any backup and be able to go back and select another with no adverse reaction.

mIRC mIRC 5.02 is the latest version of one of the most popular Internet IRC clients there is. With new improved client bot functionality and an easy to use windowed interface, it's a hard one to beat.

NeuroStock NeuroStock 6 version 1.905 is a neural based stock market prediction tool for Windows 95, and NT. You never quite know with these kind of programs. It's predictive and calculative abilities may just give you that edge on the stock market. Remember, if you get rich out of this, please donate to the PC PowerPlay employee fund! :)

Ping Graph PingGraph is a multi-threaded graphical TCP/IP network monitoring and diagnostic tool for Windows 95 and NT. PingGraph can graph response time within your Local Area Network (LAN). It can keep an eye on the response time of your favourite Internet multi-player game servers. It can even monitor your Internet Service Provider (ISP) to make sure you are getting the advertised connection quality and stability for which you are paying.

System Information Tracker

The System Information Tracker Reports the following things on your PC: MyComputer (name given to My Computer), Current operating system, Windows Version, Your computer processor, A visual on processor usage, Disk drive space available and used, Free memory, Free virtual memory, Available physical memory, Windows page size, Swap memory settings

The Little Things That

Microsoft Forgot Displays the current month, date, day simultaneously (any order) in the system tray.

Launches any DUN (Dial-Up Networking) icon with a single mouse click.

Launches the default screen saver instantly from the system tray.

Launches Explorer with a single mouse click from any defined folder and also open a DOS window in a default directory with a single mouse click (using the default COMMAND.COM shell processor or any other processor such as Norton NDOS).

Launches any program of your choice instantly. You can even change the

DOS TROUBLESHOOTING

The most likely cause of any problem is a shortage of conventional memory. This has nothing to do with how much RAM is on your system, but how it's set up. To find out how much is available for the games, type MEM /C /MORE. Look for a line that reads LARGEST EXECUTABLE PROGRAM SIZE, if it's over 550k then everything should run. If it's under that figure, you'll need to edit your system files to sort it out.

The easiest way is to use the MAKE BOOT DISK facility found on most game installation menus. If you'd prefer not to do that, then you'll need to manually edit your two configuration files - the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT.

To do so, type EDIT CONFIG.SYS and EDIT AUTOEXEC.BAT. In the CONFIG.SYS file, the most likely culprit is EMM386.EXE. You don't need it for the majority of games, so put REM at the start of the line. This will disable it. In the AUTOEXEC.BAT look to see if you are running SMARTDRV, if it's there, put REM at the start.

These two simple measures should overcome most problems. If you're still running short on conventional memory (the game should give you an error message telling you how much more you need), then a boot disk is the best solution.

THE PC POWERPLAY CD - The games on the CD are designed to be run in different ways. Some can be run straight from the disc, while others need to be installed. Games requiring installation will usually prompt you with a choice of where it will install to, so take note!

Many of the games which run from the CD will only produce sound effects if you have a Sound Blaster compatible sound card set to default settings. That's 99% of you, so if you get no sound you're best copying the game to your hard drive, then running the setup program - usually INSTALL, SETUP, CONFIG or SOUNDSET. As with all problems PC, trial and error is the only true solution. Feel free to copy an entire game to your hard drive. Also copy a game from the CD if it mysteriously refuses to install. Then run the INSTALL file from the hard drive.

DISCLAIMER - All possible care is taken while selecting, testing and installing the software which is included on the PC PowerPlay CD. Next Publishing accepts no responsibility for data loss or other damage which may occur during its use. If your CD is clearly faulty, send it in for free replacement to:

PC PowerPlay - CD Returns,
78 Renwick St, Redfern
NSW 2016

SUPPORT - cdtech@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

default icon for these programs to any icon you like and a description for each program to be popped up as a yellow tool tip when the mouse is hovered over the program icon.

Patches

Carmageddon 3Dfx upgrade patch
Fire Fight patch 1.12
GL Quake v0.94
Interstate 76 3D patch 1.081
Command and Conquer 1.08PE
Links LS 1.30

Virtual Golf

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Virtual Rally

Virtual Quake

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VFX1
HEADGEAR

sidelines

Local distributors Level 4 have snapped up a range of add-ons and expansion packs for most of the bigger name titles out there. Coming from UK Action, the range thus far is made up of *Dungeon Warrior* (250 level maps for Quake), *Ace's Revenge* (2000 level maps for Red Alert), *Devil's Domain* (add ons for Diablo and includes over 2000 levels for Warcraft II as a bonus), and *Civilized City* (over 1000 maps for Civilization II, Sim City and Sim City 2000). While generally these levels are no where near as original and captivating as the original respective levels/maps, the titles come from a company that is expanding and now include a dedicated team of programmers making new and original levels/mission. A group to look out for in the future. Totally unofficial and totally cheap, check out Dick Smith Electronics or give Level 4 a call on (02) 9922 3463 for more details.

Played the game? Now read the book! Yes, one of the most merchandise hungry phenomenons (next to Star Wars of course), *Star Trek*, now has a book of the game of the TV series of the same name. Written by Diane Carey, Sandy Fries and Dan Greenberg with the help of a further six authors, *Star Fleet Academy* tells the story of a young Cadet David Forrester and his exploits at Starfleet Academy's Command School. Sabotage, conflict, blad-de-blah, you get the picture. Especially for the more obsessed Trekkies out there. Published by Pocket Books.

MDK is coming to the television screen mid next year in the form of an animated series for US citizens. Whoopee! Why is it that only the US gets the cool cartoon spin offs of games and we don't? There's been *Wing Commander*, *Earthworm Jim* to name a few. None-the-less, we MAY get MDK over here sometime in the future, though don't hold your breath. The series will deal primarily with Kurt, and viewers will apparently learn more about his heroic motivation. Watch for the action figure range coming soon! Maybe we are better off without these computer/cartoon crossovers).

Warlords III will be pushed as one of Red Orb's (a division of Broderbund) premier titles for play over the internet with America's Mplayer. Describing *Warlords III: Reign of Heroes* as a strategy title developed by SSG - an award winning development house under Red Orb, thousands of US gamers will be able to play Red Orb titles on the net with Mplayer after a recent deal between the two companies. World class titles coming out of Australia? Who would have thought.

Be a Game Designer!

Dark Reign developers Auran just keep coming up with the goods. Great games and now great (if not the greatest) competitions. This competition that Auran and PC PowerPlay have put together will leave its mark in gaming history. How does being flown to the new, spacious Auran offices in Brisbane sound? To spend an entire week with Auran living and breathing a real game developer's environment? But best of all, to help work on their Next Big Game. Yes indeed, the winner of this competition will be the one who's game design concepts most impress the judges. At Auran HQ the winner can then spend the week hanging out with the team, helping out with the new game and generally being a fresh and talented game design genius.

To top that all off, the winner gets to write a report of their week with Auran for the world's greatest games magazine, PC PowerPlay! Here's a run down of the prizes:

WIN!

the Auran development team on their new project, all expenses paid, in Brisbane.

*** The winner will be flown Business Class return.**

*** A \$500 gift voucher to a Brisbane games retailer.**

*** A game signed by the Auran team once it is released.**

*** An acknowledgment in the manual of the game.**

*** Report of the event to be featured in PC PowerPlay.**

How does that sound? Awesome, that's what! There's always a catch though, and since this isn't a competition of ordinary calibre and scope neither are the entry conditions. To enter, you're going to have to be at least 18 years old. Apologies go to younger gamers, but the hassle of including a parent or legal guardian on such a trip is just too much to make it worthwhile. Secondly, to be in the running you're going to have to get **One week working with** your top



gaming ideas onto paper. In this case, we'd like to know your concepts for a new strategy game. Thoughts, concepts, ideas, anything! What would make a great strategy game?

Heck, as well as winning an awesome prize you get to tell the developers themselves what you want to see in a strategy game. There's no word limit for entries, but due to the number we're going to receive it's important you keep things concise. Entries will be judged by Auran boss Greg Lane and PC PowerPlay's Ben Mansill. Due to the cool nature of this competition we'll be running it over 2 issues. So get creating, you've got until Friday November 28th.

Entries to:
Game Designer comp.
Auran
PO BOX 386
Paddington
Brisbane QLD 4064

Note: You MUST cut out and include the PowerPlay and Auran logos on this page with your entry, or else it won't be accepted.

AVSDA clamp down on piracy

The Australian Video Software Distributors Association have been busy in the last twelve months since they set up office. Donning their best cammo gear, the folks from the AVSDA and the local Police service raided premises throughout New South Wales and Victoria suspected of handling pirated and illegal computer software.

Just to show you the scope and problem of illegal software in Australia, one particular games store in Melbourne was found with over eighty pirated games, and a business in Sydney was found with over 200 illegal software CDs. Considering each pirated disc can cost distributors heaps in lost business and peace of mind - the raids by the AVSDA show the problem is rife.

Don't worry yet though if you installed a friends copy of Quake on to your hard drive, because the AVSDA are targeting those

individuals and organizations that go out and make physical copies of licensed games and then sell these for a profit. These are considered the big baddies in the industry, for not only do they take business away from the retailers, they're actually making a quick buck out of it. And why are we as gamers concerned about pirated games? Because they keep the price of games high. Although the industry has flourished in the last few years, and many distributors keep the new release prices around the eighty dollar mark (and pushing off games to the classic, cheap range sooner), pirating will hold off any further drops and may likely force an increase if the problem worsens. That's something we definitely do not want. Penalties for pirating games are stiff - fines of up to \$1500 per article and up to two years in prison - so watch out!

Cut us out!



A U R A N

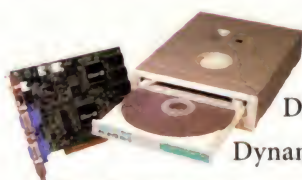
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CREATIVE

sidelines

QuakeWorld 2.0 (the program designed by id to enhance and allow games of Quake to be played at a decent speed on the net by modem users) was released by id mid-August to the adulation of many Quake fans. The newest version of QuakeWorld uses a new status bar (gone is the one colour background - now your stats appear to "float" on the screen), network play is now speeded up and should crash less, and the graphics generally appear smoother during play. Also standard with the download is a GL version of QuakeWorld for 3Dfx owners. This is one you'll need to get if you deathmatch at all, as most servers will run with the new version, which is incompatible with older ones. Go to <http://www.idsoftware.com/quakeworld/index.html> for the file.

Developers BioWare have been busy working on a new game engine, named The BioWare Infinity Engine. Using an isometric perspective in 16-bit colour, the first title to use this engine will be Baldur's Gate, an RPG published by Interplay using the AD&D Forgotten Realms license. Using a 4 Meg video card, it would be possible to raise the colour display to 24-bit (true colour). The game will use fully rendered images in a rendered environment, include a height map (creating a 3D effect), a luminosity map (allowing detailed lighting changes to objects), to name just some of the tasty features of the engine. In development for over 18 months, the engine was created by a team of 27 people to enhance the game and the RPG genre in general. With RPG's of late being generally poor, both Baldur's Gate and Ultima IX: Ascension will be the two titles to look out for in the next year.

Buy a Dynalink modem and they'll give you Quake. Not the demo, not some dodgy send in and register deal, but Quake full and complete. Check out dynalink.com.au for details.

100,000 is this month's Big Number. That's how many Need for Speed's were sold in this country on all platforms.

Cyrix merge with National Semiconductor


On July 28, 1997, National Semiconductor and Cyrix announced plans for a merger. This will enable Cyrix's low-end line of CPUs to develop into a total one chip computing solution, based on the already successful MediaGX CPU. National Semiconductors CEO Brain Halla had this to say about the matter:

"The unique combination of technologies resulting from the merger gives us all of the building blocks to provide complete system-on-a-chip solutions for sub-\$500 PCs and a broad range of low-cost information appliances."

The outcome of the merger is still not certain and rests on the opinion of the Cyrix shareholders, the outcome should be decided by sometime in November 1997. Rumours that Cyrix will give up its small market share of the high-end processor market seems to be not true (hurrah!). We would expect that Cyrix's top end 6x86MX processor would continue to be enhanced and priced competitively against Intel and AMD's offerings. The current deal with IBM to manufacture Cyrix CPU's will stay but will be complemented by National Semiconductors advanced fabrication plants and distribution channels.

National Semiconductor and Cyrix should have a winner on it's hands with the complete system on a single chip. This type of CPU could be used in cheap PC's (sub AU\$1000) and embedded appliances (WebTV's, PDA's, etc.). This would be a very good direction for Cyrix to head in now and would mean that they can dominate in an area where Intel seems to have forgotten.



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Microsoft VS OpenGL, part 3

This is another one to add to the massive pool that is marked The Conspiracy Theory (TM) Cover Up Scandal Pool. Forget aliens and virile ninety year olds being suppressed from public knowledge - this is here and now and it involves gaming.

Deciding not to wait for some sort of agreement between Microsoft and other OpenGL developers, a lone programmer and mega Quake freak known as Zanshin decided to go about developing the code that would accompany a full version of OpenGL - one that is not DOS specific (which is currently the only version available) and would make full use of Win 95 and Direct3D (which could seriously boost the performance of GL games). Undertaking this mammoth task on his own, the complex ZGL (Zanshin's GL Library for 3Dfx) code was claimed to include a fifty percent increase of acceleration of

the mini-port drivers for GLQuake and would make use of Pentium Pro and Pentium II acceleration features.

Surprisingly enough, only a few days before Zanshin's work could be publicly sampled, Zanshin was served with a court order banning him from discussing or disclosing any more information about his work to the populace. His two "on loan" machines were carted away, and a court appearance was set for September 29. No-one knows yet who instigated the action. It's not the first time a lone star's pioneering technology has been "dealt with" in such a manner, and unfortunately, little else is known except that there is no ZGL Quake at the moment and still no resolve to the entire saga. This is one case that is being nervously watched by all in the graphics accelerator industry, and as news develops, we'll pass it on.

TOP TEN GAMES

Rank	Title
Developer / Distributor	
TW	LW
1	1 DUNGEON KEEPER
INTERPLAY / ELECTRONIC ARTS	
2	2 CARMAGEDDON
SCI / HILAD	
3	3 NEED FOR SPEED II
ELECTRONIC ARTS / ELECTRONIC ARTS	
4	4 C&C: RED ALERT
WESTWOOD(VIE) / SEGA OZISOFT	
5	7 X-COM APOCALYPSE
MICROPROSE / SEAG OZISOFT	
6	18 NEED FOR SPEED (Special Ed.)
ELECTRONIC ARTS / ELECTRONIC ARTS	
7	5 X-WING vs. TIE FIGHTER
LUCASARTS / METRO GAMES	
8	6 DUKE NUKEM 3D ATOMIC
ID SOFTWARE / ROADSHOW	
9	14 GRAND PRIX 2
MICROPROSE / SEAG OZISOFT	
10	8 TOMB RAIDER
EIDOS / SEGA OZISOFT	

Week ending 27th July

The ACER best selling charts are carefully compiled from a sample panel of retailers selected across Australia including mass merchants, department stores, specialty software stores and independent outlets. Retailers surveyed include Myer Grace Bros, David Jones and John Martins, K Mart, Target, Big W, World 4 Kids, Harvey Norman Computer Super stores, Blockbuster, Brashers, Video Games Heaven and Games Wizards ©1997

Charts supplied by Australian Computer Entertainment Review

ACER



Chuck up time

It's mid summer in the UK, it has been in the 80s for the last 2 weeks and the only decent rain we have had was while the Test Match was on. The computer game industry is gearing up for what is regarded as Europe's equivalent of the E3, the European Computer Trade Show. Over the last 3 years it has become a world event in London and for 3 days solid, you can see all the very best of British games and of course loads of games from US and the rest of Europe. All the expected Christmas hits will be on display but essentially, no matter what you hear from elsewhere, it is the biggest excuse to party and get drunk. Each publisher will try to outdo the other by having the most outrageous party or giving away the best freebies. In as far as the show games releases are concerned most publisher are keeping quiet so they can unveil their goodies.

Not true, or is it?

The latest rumour is that the company who have so many games, and good ones at that, are in a bit of trouble. Eidos, it appears, have just shown a massive fall in their share price. To the likes of Joe Bloggs, this means nothing but if Eidos were to be in real trouble there could be bad times ahead for gaming in general as the Eidos infrastructure is as sound as it could possibly be!

Pop Pop Musac

The UK has always been the central focus of the music industry and over the next few months we shall see UK bands asserting their popularity with some excellent multi media and computer games. Check out the Oasis, What the Story Morning Glory, Songbook. If you want to play like Blur, INXS (yes an Aussie band), U2, Jamiroquai, then CD Songbooks featuring these bands are being made as we talk!

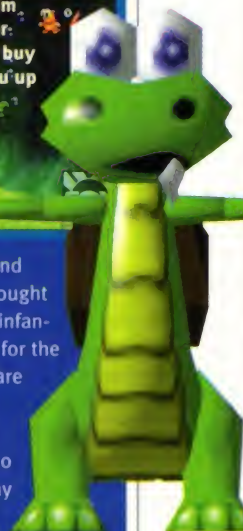
Watch out for, Queen: The Eye from EA. I got the producer to

briefly explain the product, "The story and the characterisations within the game are pure action adventure. The environments are incredibly rich in gameplay and visuals. The backdrops are stunning but the physical puzzles and dangers which lurk within them are very real and very dangerous for the player. The motion capture moves enable the player to have a

range of animations unlike any seen in this genre. The narrative sucks the player along to a climatic ending. The music is part of this whole experience and you have remixed soundtracks from Queen to give you the total experience!

Foxy....

Fox Interactive, who brought us Die Hard Trilogy and The Simpsons, is ready to unveil a game that could rival Mario and Sonic in terms of both the impact of a game and merchandising. Argonaut, a London based developer, who brought us the ground breaking Starglider when the Amiga was in its infancy, and then went onto to present the public with the FX chip for the SNES with StarFox and more recently the great N64 version, are now focusing on the Playstation and PC with a game called Croc. You control Croc, a green cutesy with attitude in what essentially is a platform 3D adventure game. What makes it so compelling? Graphically it is great looking with solid gameplay and some stunning special effects and camera angles. The game has so much variety it is hard to focus on one certain aspect. This is a game you have got to play to appreciate how good it is!



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They're all thieves

This story has been around for a couple of years now, but it keeps resurfacing like bad arcade games. There's this guy, Craig Enokian of Illinois, who says he holds the copyright rights to the use of and we quote here, "...real actors or players, making actual plays of the game in question, which have been recorded on video tape, or video disks, or other recording mediums." Huh? Well, in other words any game with motion - video or animation. So, he has sic-ed his lawyer, one Ernest Kettelson, on the computer gaming industry. The latest to receive a threatening letter to stop making games and infringing upon Enokian's patent is Apogee. Apogee's Scott Miller has made the letter public and the juicy part reads, "An examination of your animated video games such as Duke Nukem 3D indicates that they infringe our client's patent... Immediately cease and desist from further manufacture, sale and use of such animated video games." Yeah, right. Miller says he has sic-ed his lawyers on Enokian's lawyer and so we'll see how this fight shapes up.

Through the Looking Glass

Trendy game design house Looking Glass has merged with an old and venerable software company, Intermetrics, to form an all-new company Intermetrics/Looking Glass Technologies, LLC.

"It not only takes imagination, talent and creativity to be successful in the gaming industry, it takes savvy management, a top notch business development organization and a cost-effective infrastructure," says Looking Glass' Paul Neurath. Looking Glass is the home of Warren Spector, who produced Ultima Underworld for Origin and Looking Glass' System Shock. Current projects include The Dark Project. Intermetrics is a mover and shaker in the computer language and tools development niche for the defense department. Although they did develop the Engage games network backbone.

Counterstrike Hits Home

Westwood Studios says that Counterstrike, the first add-on to Command & Conquer: Red Alert, is the fastest selling expansion pack in PC gaming history. In a prepared release, Westwood says that Counterstrike has sold 650,000 units since its release this past April. Westwood's Brett Sperry says, "Any title that sells more than 100,000 copies is considered a success in the gaming industry. The fact that Counterstrike has sold more than 650,000 copies, and has been listed on PC Data's top-10 list for three months, confirms that Westwood has created one of the strongest franchises and most popular brand names in gaming history." While C & C is a strong game



When it Rainz, it pours!

A twenty-something software consultant from Indianapolis, Indiana has found his 15 minutes of fame just as Andy Warhol had predicted. Rainz, as he is known in the online gaming world of Ultima Online, is the man responsible for killing Lord British. Yes, as most Ultima fans know Lord British is the alter ego of Ultima creator Richard Garriott and he was supposed to be unkillable until Rainz got lucky. As the story goes, while playing online a few days ago, Rainz's rogue character thieved an offensive spell scroll while working a crowd gathered to hear Lord British speak. The spell scroll was used and Lord British got toasted, literally, when the fire spell erupted killing Ultima's number 1 character. For his troubles, Rainz was banned from Ultima and all the Underworld games by Origin for not playing well with others. It seems Rainz likes playing characters with evil alignments and creating lots of death and chaos by using beta bugs, which is how he killed Lord British. Origin will soon be taking the game out of beta, but is rumoured to be only considering shipping 50,000 units until they can make sure that the servers can handle enormous amounts of players. Origin did send out a press release saying that just over 2,800 players were online in the Ultima Underworld making it the largest single game ever played.

Quake's Newest Challenge

Dennis Fong was the happy winner of the E3's Red Annihilation Tournament and took home John Carmack's Ferrari as grand prize this summer. More recently, Thresh - as he's known in the Quake world - had been challenged to another deathmatch by Craig Hubbard, a friend of Monolith Studios' (Blood) president Jason Hall, but that has fallen through. At first, the challenge was only a hundred-dollar bet; then stakes rose to a whopping \$25,000 winner take all event. Fong said he would

Thresh, the fastest gunslinger in Quakeworld



play Hubbard, but use his own money as a grub-stake and not use other peoples' money. On the other hand, Hubbard says this has all gotten out of hand and he will not play Thresh in the current environment. Hubbard says he is working hard on a Monolith game called Riot and doesn't have time for all this. Who says Quake isn't some fragging big deal any more?

and a bonifide hit, more time is needed to tell if it will become one of the 'strongest franchises...in gaming history.'

Activision is Hexxed

Activision has acquired Raven Software, the makers of Hexen and Heretic for a stock swap valued at some \$12 million. Raven stockholders will get 1.04 million Activision shares and in return Raven will become a wholly owned subsidiary. Now Activision has its hot little hands on Heretic and Hexen and the upcoming Hexen 2 as well as any and all add-ons and sequels. Also coming with the deal are two other Raven games: MageSlayer, and Take No Prisoners.





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How's this: Each month we'll arrange for an attractive and friendly Australia Post employee to bring you PC PowerPlay. Phenomenal. You'd think that this service would cost big time dollars, but no - it's cheaper. Unbelievable. Settle down now, because the deal is about to get really nutty - it's quicker too! Amazing.

Now that you possess this incredibly useful information you are no doubt searching for a pen to fill out the form - but wait! There's more!

Thanks to the kind and attractive folks at Metro Games, we've got a very cool prize to get you motivated.

One new subscriber or subscription renewer this month will win the highly funky Extreme Assault Deluxe Edition prize pack.

It includes:

1 x Maxi Gamer 3Dfx. Yes, a 3Dfx 3D accelerator, only the best thing EVER to happen to PC gaming, but being a PowerPlay reader you'd know this already.

1 x X-Fighter Joystick. Remember our Ultimate Joystick test in issue 12? No? Well this beauty won outright and is absolutely the best joystick around.

1 x Extreme Assault jacket. Be the envy of your fashion-challenged chums in this stylish and practical jacket.

1 x copy of Extreme Assault. The game. Read the review on page 74. We love this game! Plus, if your life is somehow cursed and you're a habitual loser fear not! For we have 5 copies of Extreme Assault for runner ups.

So, DO IT!

Issue #15 winners (Banksia WaveSP 33.6 modem):
Ben Duck, Jeremy Little, Fred Woodbridge

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The PC PowerPlay Official Games Listing

Here they are. This exhaustive list has all the games released during the qualifying period. Probably. If we've accidentally missed your favourite game then just go right ahead and enter it. We'd like that a lot.

NOVEMBER 1996 ISSUE 7

- * Crusader: No Regret *
- * Mechwarrior 2: Mercenaries *
- * Gex *
- * Krush Kill 'n Destroy *
- * Full Court Press *
- * Rally Championship *
- * Jagged Alliance 2: Deadly Games *
- * Mega Race 2 *
- * Monster Truck Madness *
- * Baku Baku *
- * Hell Bender *
- * Radix *
- * Tyrian *

DECEMBER 1996 ISSUE 8

- * Command & Conquer: Red Alert *
- * Privateer 2: The Darkening *
- * Hyperblade *
- * Lighthouse *
- * Star Control 3 *
- * Gene Wars *
- * F-22 Lightning 2 *
- * Azraels Tear *
- * Daggerfall *
- * Albion *
- * Creatures *
- * Shattered Steel *
- * F1 Manager *
- * Road Rash *
- * Amok *
- * Madden NHL 97 *
- * Assassin 2015 *
- * Bedlam *
- * Screamer 2 *
- * Civil War *

JANUARY 1997 ISSUE 9

- * Syndicate Wars *
- * Tomb Raider *
- * Archimedean Dynasty *
- * Rally Challenge *
- * Nine *
- * Wing Commander: The Kilrathi Saga *

- * Blood and Magic *
- * Wizardry *
- * Dreamworks *
- * SWIV *
- * Sherlock Holmes *
- * Time Lapse *
- * Krazy Ivan *
- * XS *
- * Surface Tension *
- * Brainstorm *
- * Bug *
- * Hind *
- * The Martian Chronicles *
- * Master of Dimensions *

FEB/MARCH 97 ISSUE 10

- * Discworld 2 *
- * Master of Orion 2 *
- * Jet Fighter 3 *
- * Alien Trilogly *
- * Fragile Allegiance *
- * Lord of the Realms 2 *
- * Rama *
- * Goosebumps *
- * AFL *
- * Heroes of Might and Magic 2 *
- * Titanic *
- * FIFA 97 *
- * Fable *
- * Necrodome *
- * Blue Ice *
- * Championship Manager 2 *
- * Davis Cup Tennis *
- * Daytona *
- * Destiny *
- * Dog Day *
- * Harpoon 97 *
- * Hoyle Casino *
- * Hunter Hunted *
- * Metal Storm *
- * MS Flight Sim *
- * MS football *
- * Mummy *
- * Power Chess *
- * Sim Copter *
- * Virtua Cop *

APRIL 1997 ISSUE 11

- * Diablo *
- * Phantasmagoria 2 *
- * Realms of the Haunting *
- * Stars! *
- * A-10 Cuba! *
- * Deus *
- * Versailles *
- * Nascar 2 *
- * Arc of Time *
- * Flying Corp *
- * POD *
- * Sega Rally *
- * Super EF2000 Tactcom *
- * Power F1 *
- * Dragon Lore 2 *
- * Death Rally *
- * Nine *
- * Battleground: Antietam *
- * Spiderman: The Sinister Six *
- * Hang Time *

- * Orion Burger *
- * AH-64 Flashpoint Korea *
- * Wages of War *

MAY 1997 ISSUE 12

- * MDK *
- * Battle Crusier 3000AD *
- * Ecstatica 2 *
- * 2 Quake Mission Packs *
- * City of Lost Children *
- * Theme Hopital *
- * Magic: The Gathering-Acclaim *
- * Magic: The Gathering-MicoProse *
- * Terminator: Skynet *
- * Formula 1 3Dfx *
- * Air Warrior II *
- * Warcraft 2: The Next 70 Levels *
- * NCAA Final Four '97 *
- * Norse by Norsewest *
- * Ultimate Soccer Manager 2 *
- * 3rd Reich *
- * Yoda Stories *
- * Golf Pro 2000 *
- * SlamTilt *
- * Cave Wars *
- * Settlers 2 mission disk *
- * Over The Reich *
- * Noir *

JUNE 1997 ISSUE 13

- * X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter *
- * Star Trek Generations *
- * The Need For Speed 2 *
- * Outlaws *
- * The Last Express *
- * Independence Day *
- * M1A2 Abrams *
- * Fallen Haven *
- * Red Alert: Counterstrike *
- * Scarab *
- * Dog Day *
- * Age of Sail *
- * Wooden Ships and Iron Men *
- * Die Hard Trilogy *
- * Fork in the Tale *
- * Test Drive off Road *
- * Star Trek Borg *
- * ATF Gold *
- * Zombie Wars *
- * Sonic and knuckles *
- * Apache Longbow Gold *

JULY 1997 ISSUE 14

- * Dark Reign *
- * Comanche 3 *
- * Redneck Rampage *
- * Blood *
- * Imperium Galactica *
- * Star Command *
- * Darklight Conflict *
- * Wipeout 2097 *
- * Callahan's Crosstime Saloon *
- * Sentient *
- * Into the Void *
- * 3D Mini Golf *

- * C&C for Win 95 *
- * You don't Know Jack: MOVIES *
- * Shivers 2 *
- * NBA JAM *
- * Vegas Games *
- * Lunatics *
- * Flipout *

AUGUST 1997 ISSUE 15

- * Carmageddon *
- * Twinsen's Odyssey *
- * X-COM: Apocalypse *
- * Constructor *
- * Shadows Over Riva *
- * Obsidian *
- * G-Nome *
- * Tom Clancy SSN *
- * Helicops *
- * Chess Wars *
- * Rocket Jockey *
- * Battleground: Bull Run *
- * Battleground: Napoleon *
- * Battleship *
- * Jetfighter 3: Mission disk *
- * Tigershark *
- * Risk *

SEPTEMBER 97 ISSUE 16

- * Dungeon Keeper *
- * Betrayal at Antara *
- * Warlords III *
- * Moto Racer *
- * Earth 2140 *
- * Actua Soccer *
- * Premier Manager 97 *
- * FIFA Soccer Manager *
- * Shrak Quake *
- * F-18 Hornet 3.0 *
- * 688i Nuclear Sub *
- * Sand Warrior *
- * Meat Puppets *
- * Agent Armstrong *
- * Descent II Infinite Abyss *
- * Atomic Bomberman *
- * Duke 3D Plutonium Pack *
- * Triple Play 97 *

OCTOBER 1997 ISSUE 17

- * Lands Of Lore 2 *
- * Star Trek Academy *
- * Age of Empires *
- * Enemy Nations *
- * Birthright *
- * Cricket 97 *
- * Great Battles of Alexander *
- * IF 22 *
- * F-16 *
- * Atlantis *
- * Mass Destruction *
- * Terracide *
- * Extreme Assault *
- * Battle at Ardenne *
- * Babe Ruth Baseball *
- * Dragon Dice *
- * Pacific General *

PC PowerPlay

G.O.T.Y.

Game Of The Year

It's on!
Welcome to the
inaugural running of
the PC PowerPlay
Game Of The Year

awards. Why are we doing
this? Why? Because gamers have
good, strong opinions about what's
the best in gaming, problem is,
because gamers have no friends and
never go out, important opinions are
kept quiet where they benefit nobody.

So, how to share your valued opin-
ions with the world then...

You could rant about what games
you reckon are tops to your one
remaining mate, or, you could vote

in the PC
PowerPlay Game
Of The Year
awards.

This is going to be
huge. Really huge
and really important.
Like Car Of The Year,
except with games. You'll
probably see the winners
announced on the TV
news - in a few years...

Yes indeed, this is one
annual award with a big future.

After much deliberation we've
decided to make it a Reader's Choice
award. You hear what we think every
month (and we'd just like to take
this opportunity to say how thrilled
we all are that you care), but this
award is about what you think.

HOW Here's how it works. The
awards cover the calendar year that
starts at the beginning of November
(which means that all the games in
this issue round off the inaugural
year). That way we cover all the big
games from last Christmas. You'll

have had all year to really get to
know the games too, so give
those over-hyped games what
they deserve! Equally, make sure
those little gems get the thumbs up!

As you've probably noticed by
now, we've categorised the whole
game scene by genre. We've also
put a few examples alongside each
category in case you get a bit mixed
up and put Theme Hospital under
"Driving Games".

There is no strict criteria for what
makes a game the best in each
genre. Simply vote for the game you
liked best. We're gamers, we can't
deal with concepts any more compli-
cated than that. On the other hand,
Game Of The Year needs a bit of a
philosophical charter to get those
arguments heated up. So, cop this:

GOTY is the game which has
brought the greatest fun, with the
least grief.

We'll run the entry form again next
issue, but remember, **ALL VOTES
MUST BE RECEIVED BY TUESDAY
18th NOVEMBER.**

The results will be published in the
January issue of PC PowerPlay.

WHY To have your say, to leave

Win a 3Dfx!



your mark, to participate, to be
involved dammit!

Still thinking of wussing out? If you
don't vote your entire life will be a
pathetic tale of missed opportunity. Still
not motivated? Then think about this:

6 voters pulled at random at the
end of voting will win a Diamond
Monster 3D video accelerator. Being
a PC PowerPlay reader, you'd know
that this is our absolutely favourite
gaming device of all time. We've got
six of them to give away thanks to
Chips n Bits, so enter. Now.

Online voting

Too precious to cut a hole in
PowerPlay? Thanks for that,
we're touched. Still want to
vote? Do it online. Just visit
www.hyperactive.com.au

There you'll find a highly
sophisticated online voting
form. Cool huh?

Cut and send to: G.O.T.Y.
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick St, Redfern NSW, 2016

1997 PC POWERPLAY G.O.T.Y.

First person Action

- * Quake Mission Packs ☐
- * Outlaws ☐
- * Terminator: Skynet ☐
- * Redneck Rampage ☐
- * Blood ☐
- * Descent II - Infinite Abyss ☐
- * Duke Nukem 3D Atomic Ed. ☐
- * Other ☐

Action

- * Crusader: No Regret ☐
- * HyperBlade ☐
- * Syndicate Wars ☐
- * Diablo ☐
- * MDK ☐
- * Other ☐

Real Time Strategy

- * C&C: Red Alert ☐
- * Theme Hospital ☐
- * Krush Kill 'N Destroy ☐
- * Constructor ☐
- * Dungeon Keeper ☐
- * Other ☐

Turn-based Strategy

- * Masters Of Orion 2 ☐
- * Stars! ☐
- * Warlords III ☐
- * Great Battles of Alexander ☐
- * Magic the Gathering ☐
- * Jag2: Deadly Games ☐
- * X-Com Apocalypse ☐
- * Other ☐

RPG

- * Daggerfall ☐
- * Betrayal in Antara ☐
- * Lands of Lore 2 ☐
- * Azreal's Tear ☐
- * Other ☐

Driving/Racing

- * Moto Racer ☐
- * Rally Championship ☐
- * Monster Truck Madness ☐
- * Need for Speed 2 ☐
- * Rally challenge ☐
- * Daytona ☐
- * Nascar 2 ☐
- * POD ☐
- * Sega Rally ☐
- * Interstate 76 ☐
- * Other ☐

Flight sim

- * F-16 Fighting Falcon ☐
- * iF-22 ☐
- * F-22 Lightning 2 ☐
- * Jet Fighter 3 ☐
- * MS Flight Sim ☐
- * Super EF-2000 Tactcom ☐
- * AH 64 Longbow ☐
- * ATF Gold ☐
- * F-18 Hornet ☐
- * Other ☐

Action Adventure

- * Tomb Raider ☐
- * Ecstatica 2 ☐
- * Discworld 2 ☐
- * Hunter Hunted ☐
- * Other ☐

HOW TO DO IT

Simply tick one box in the
categories you wish to vote in,
or tick "other" and print your
own choice.

Name

Address

Phone

Fantasy Flight Sim

- * X-Wing v Tie Fighter ☐
- * Privateer 2 ☐
- * Wing Commander:
The Kilrathi Saga ☐
- * BattleCruiser 3000AD ☐
- * TigerShark ☐
- * Other ☐

Adventure

- * Dog Day ☐
- * Blue Ice ☐
- * 9 ☐
- * City of the Lost Children ☐
- * Other ☐

Puzzle

- * Baku Baku ☐
- * Bust-a-Move 2 ☐
- * Slam Tilt ☐
- * Other ☐

Sports

- * FIFA 97 ☐
- * Triple Play 97 ☐
- * Championship Manager 2 ☐
- * Premier Manager 97 ☐
- * Golf Pro 2000 ☐
- * Cricket 97 ☐
- * Davis Cup tennis ☐
- * Other ☐

Multiplayer

- * QuakeWorld ☐
- * Diablo ☐
- * Red Alert ☐
- * Interstate '76 ☐
- * X-Wing v Tie Fighter ☐
- * You Don't Know Jack ☐
- * Command & Conquer Win 95 ☐
- * Other ☐

Online game

- * Subspace ☐
- * HoverRace ☐
- * Other ☐

Online RPG

- * The Realm ☐
- * Meridan 59 ☐
- * Ultima Online ☐
- * Other ☐

Best Australian game

- * KKND ☐
- * Dog Day ☐
- * Cricket 97 ☐
- * Rally Challenge ☐
- * Other ☐

Best GAME overall

COMPETITIONS

Star Fleet Academy

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope.

All entries close October 24, 1997

Entries to:

PC PowerPlay, 78 Renwick st.
Redfern NSW 2016

Issue # 15 winners:
LUCKY BASTARDS!

TWINSSENS ODYSSEY

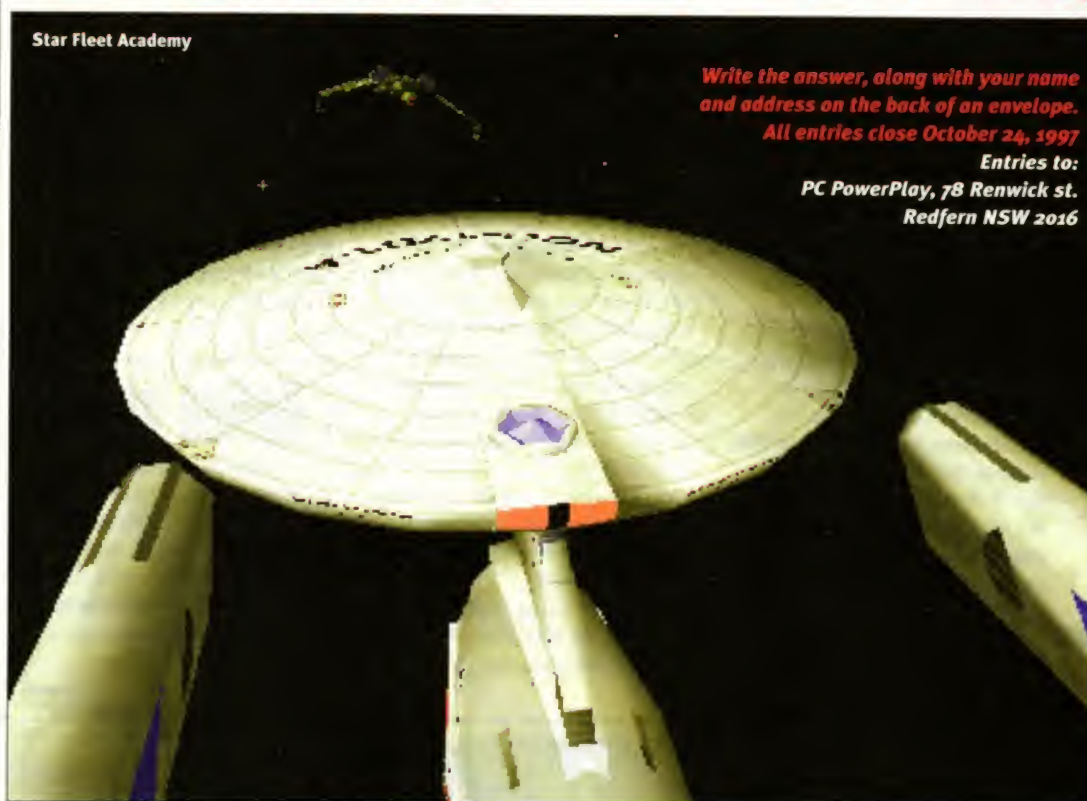
P. Barnett, Bucasia QLD.
K. Womack, Merriwa WA.
J. Burton, Payneham SA.
B. Dorff, Bonnet Bay NSW.
A. Newall, Ulverstone TAS.
P. McLean, Yeerongpilly QLD.

DIRECTSOFT MEGAMEDIA PACKS

J. Boyce, Nambour QLD.
R. Brockwell, Grafton NSW.
A. Dillon, East Victoria Park WA.
M. Haidn, Kallangur QLD.
B. Johns, Alexandra Hills QLD.
L. Jane, East Keilor VIC.
E. Tomano, Wangaratta VIC.
J. Fell, East Keilor VIC.
L. Nuss, Clear MT QLD.
D. Cristo, Concord West NSW.
N. Dillon, Margaret River WA.
M. Couch, East Victoria Park WA.

Multiplay

B. Hall, Whyalla SA.
G. Hunter, Sunshine VIC.
M. Allen, Wembley WA.
J. Friedrich, Mosman NSW.
E. Fleming, Burleigh Waters QLD.
P. Durkin, Blayney NSW.



Constructor

There's nothing like a strategy game with plenty of tongue in cheek humour. Constructor is one such game. How many of you have ever wanted to fill your land lord's shoes and go absolutely ballistic in returning all the hardship and suffering they've had you endure? With a bit of imagination, Constructor could be the ultimate tension reliever. It's also a totally great game and scored an impressive 84% in issue #15. Village Roadshow want six of you lucky PC PowerPlay readers to have a go for yourself. All you need to do is answer this question...

Q. What are the yobbos most likely to chant on their drunken rampage?



Age of Empires

Age of Empires

Thankfully Microsoft didn't rest on their laurels and set out to undo the damage that the previous titles did to good ol' Billy's name. Age Of Empires is an absolute classic, with challenging gameplay and beautiful strategy elements. Yep, it's even given some of us here a case of IGS (Introverted Gamer's Syndrome) - an affliction where the affected rambles on unintelligently about the said game and generally appears sleep deprived. It's that good. Microsoft have given us 10 copies to send your way. Prepare to be rocked!

Q. Which other classic game did Bruce Shelley help design?

Star Fleet Academy

This one has been on the "almost finished" list of games for months now, and we almost shed a tear when it finally made it into our office in finished form. Yes, all of you that have been living, breathing and thinking Star Trek can finally get your hands on the Star Trek sim to put all others to shame. EA have given us 6 copies of this new corker from Interplay to send your way.

Q. What's the highest setting on a Type 1 Phaser?

Cricket 97 Ashes Edition

Well, we won the ashes fair and square, again, so how better to celebrate with an ashes edition of the respectable Beam cricket game, Cricket 97? This edition had got most of the things that the straight edition didn't - real player and names, stadiums and other tasty licenses. Of course, we'll never get a game that captures the real spirit of Australian Cricket - like Merv Hughes' gut, David Boon's crack, beer skulling comps and the like. Instead we get an enjoyable alternative to backyard cricket. EA, being the good sports that they are, gave us 6 copies to give away. Each game also comes with a stylish EA Sports Anorak!

Q. What was Mark Taylors combined score for the entire Ashes series of 1997?



Ancient Prophecy.
Sadistic Evil.
One Man's
Destiny.

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WING COMMANDER 5

A CHRIS ROBERTS PRODUCTION

A ROD NAKAMOTO PRODUCTION



Rod Nakamoto has moved into the industry's hottest seat: the Captain's chair of S.S. Wing Commander, one of the most successful game series in the industry's history.

Charting the course for *Prophecy* and its development team, Maverick Productions, Nakamoto is respectful of the technology and game play fans have come to admire, while being candidly honest about where it has gone wrong in years passed. Too much Hollywood? "Yes," he admits. Too much money? "Yes" to that, too.

And while some fans thought Chris Roberts' departure meant big trouble for the series, according to Nakamoto, it's anything but. His name might not be as familiar as some in the industry, his co-worker Richard Garriott for example, but Nakamoto brings a wealth of experience to Origin. Former Vice President of



SegaSoft and Sega's Interactive Development Division, he's no lightweight.

In fact, he can trace his history in the computer gaming industry back to the days when four-color monitors were just a dream and the only sound computers made were occasional beeps before crashing into oblivion. He developed the Mockingboard, the first speech synthesis product available for home computers, and had a hand in such long ago products as *Ikari Warriors*, *Victory Road* and *Super Hang-On* among others.

Now at Origin, Nakamoto is ready to pilot his crew toward *Wing Commander Prophecy*, full speed ahead and set to launch this Christmas.

PC PP: Wing Commander has a very huge and loyal following, Rod. So, how do you walk that bridge? Changing the game enough to push the state of the art without alienating the veterans who like it for what it is?

RN: I really think there is a very specific formula that you follow that was established by Chris Roberts in *Wing Commander I* and *II*, and actually more in *Wing Commander I*. When *Wing Commander I* first came out, there was pretty much nothing like it in the games industry, a space combat simulation with real story and fiction to drive the game. I think that we have to stay with that formula. A problem occurred with *Wing Commander III* and *IV* with the introduction of FMV [full motion video]. It took a lot more precedence over the game play, and I think that those products really went slightly out of balance. In doing this product, we wanted to bring it back

in balance where there's more game play. The game play was the most important part of the product. The FMV was important as support material to drive the game play. I think if you try to stay with the original formula, you will not lose the hard-core *Wing Commander* fans, and you will absolutely gain people who are new to the games market.

PC PP: Wing Commander hasn't been the only game to fall prey to too much FMV. Do you think the industry as a whole has been hurt by the Hollywood mentality? "Let's put in as many cut scenes as possible?"

RN: Yes, absolutely. Part of my goal in coming into Origin was to really provide a better, much more objective look at what FMV does to a product. You know, even back in the Sega days, everybody was doing things like *Night Trap* and *Sewer Shark* and products like that.



They were enamoured by the Hollywood production environment and really wanted to use that to produce games. The problem was they became so enamoured with that process, they forgot about the game. So, yes, it absolutely hurt the industry as a whole, even Electronic Arts [EA]. Some of their most recent ventures are distribution deals with AnyRiver Entertainment, and a product like *Fork in the Tale*. That was a terrible use of FMV. We iterated the fact that we in this industry really don't know how to use that properly. It was at the forefront of my thoughts to provide an appropriate balance with *Wing Commander* and not to misuse FMV in production, in anything other than a role to support the product.

PC PP: To make FMV more of a tool, a component to further the game play, and not the star of the product itself?

RN: Exactly, exactly, that's it exactly. I think we all forget that it's much better elsewhere. Can we use this computer medium to show off how we can make movies? The fact of the matter is I can go down to Blockbuster and for 99 cents I can get a much more impressive cinematic experience by renting a video tape.

PC PP: You know, it's interesting because all that FMV put the cost of Wing Commander IV through the roof, \$8-12 million.

RN: No one even knows what the figure is. It's horrendous. I mean, it's probably a big embarrassment for EA to have to live through that kind of press. Certainly, while it was still a popular product, it didn't do nearly as well as one would hope with the money that was poured into it.

PC PP: And the cheapest thing you can put into a game is game play. It seems that we've lost sight of that.

RN: That's why we've really worked hard to bring that back. It's now the core of this product. It is all about game play. One of the things that is probably quite evident, especially in Wing Commander III and IV, is the way they designed it. They wrote the fiction, shot the movies and then they built the game. We did it completely the other way around. We designed the game, and made sure we had a core game that was absolutely fun and appropriate to the Wing Commander universe. Then we built the fiction to wrap around that core, and we shot the live production element to support that core. So, it was the other way around. The first thing we did was to design the game.



PC PP: And that's probably made a huge difference obviously.

RN: It's made a big, big difference. It's really starting to show how much difference it makes in being able to do it that way.

PC PP: So, you've regrouped Maverick. You've returned FMV to its rightful place as a tool. You've returned to the original formula that made the series so successful in the first place: game play first. So, this Christmas, which you say you're on for, what kind of Wing Commander can players expect?

RN: It's actually the first of a three-part story, and it introduces a brand new alien invader. What is unique about this alien invader is that

again, the game play has a great deal of depth. There's a whole new graphics technology driving it, too. There's all new missions and a really in-depth AI component that provide a great deal of realism when you're playing in the single-player mode. The multiplayer part of it is very Quake-like. We've divided it into scenarios where you can compete against each other, play Gauntlet-style or a deathmatch style of multiplayer. It is separate from the single-player component intentionally.

PC PP: This new graphics technology, can you tell me a bit about it?

RN: One of the things that we looked at when we started to rebuild Wing Commander was the technology. Technology is a driving issue, to be able to visually represent the game and the story in today's terms, on today's work stations. Our graphics technology was built from



the ground up, and, given what we wanted to display, was absolutely necessary. For example, we have giant capital ships - it literally takes 20 seconds for a little fighter to fly alongside its complete length. It's a huge graphic element in terms of scale to your particular fighter. That technology is very expensive in software, but we needed to build that into this product in order to make this kind of representation. We also built in the technology for native 3D accelerator card support and to support Microsoft Direct 3D. So, there is a much more extensive capability that we built into our technology to be able to visually represent the kind of product, the kind of images, you'd expect from this particular series.

physics much into consideration when they built [AI] into the game's capabilities. We have what we call a "real world physics model" in place so that when a space ship turns, it doesn't literally turn on a dime. There is some sliding. There are ships that take advantage of physics, that have different capabilities. So, one ship will give you a much faster yaw rate and another will give you a much faster pitch rate. You need to be able to make use of these different capabilities in a fighting situation. All of those things are now taken into account and built into the product. Again, that gives you more immersion into the product, into the Wing Commander universe.

PC PP: As the main person behind the scenes, what's do you think is the coolest thing in the new Wing Commander?



RN: I think the first thing you'll notice is that when you plug in a 3D accelerator card, it's probably the most visually stunning game that you've ever seen. I know that a lot of people like to say that, but I really get excited when I look at this product and see it 3D accelerated. It's really fun to watch, and the frame-rate stays high, above 24 frames per second with the 3D accelerator card. It is absolutely one of the most fluid products I've ever played. I'm really pleased with that.

PC PP: Since you go back so far in this industry, Rod, did you ever think way back then that people would want to take these wonderful business machines and fly them through outer space?

"The multiplayer part of it is very Quake-like. We've divided it into scenarios where you can compete against each other, play Gauntlet-style or a deathmatch style of multiplayer"

we actually contracted Syd Mead, a Hollywood visualization specialist. He did all the visualization and original design for Blade Runner, the movie, 2010, among others, and he's really very, very well known in the film community. He helped us establish the look of these new alien invaders. So, hopefully, when you look at these images, you'll see that they are absolutely stunning. The story is solid throughout the game in your dealings with this new threat, this alien invader. I don't want to tell you anymore, because you could give a lot away. It is, I think, very refreshing, and it introduces a new character that you're going to play, not Commander Blair. It's a young rookie that you play as your avatar. I think it's a lot more interesting, and

PC PP: The AI particularly interests me because I think it's recently been taken up a notch by another product still in development, Myth by Bungie, and a little bit closer to home, I think LookingGlass' Flight Unlimited pushed the envelope previously. Modelling real world physics within games has become a big factor, especially since computers are now capable of representing it both mathematically and visually. Is that something that's pushed you or that you've really taken into account when developing your AI?

RN: Yes. Suffice to say that the previous Wing Commanders probably didn't take

RN: [Laughs] No. Back then, I got wrapped up in the Apple II adventure stuff, the text-only Zork products, and it really allowed people to further their imagination. With the abilities that the computer has now, the main thing we'll see at this point is much greater immersion from these systems. I think we've seen a period of time where they were just "picture books." As soon as we walked away from the machine, the game, the experience was gone. I think there will be more products that continue to draw us in even when we walk away. It's changing so much and has changed so much in the last five years. It's a totally different path than I ever imagined back in the 1980's.

Brenda Garneau



The Beam way

With over 100 titles published or under development, make no mistake, Beam are big. Beam have been around for almost a decade and have secured their place in gaming folklore with their classic older games, as well as being a name that generates excitement when a new title is announced. Their market-driven approach contributes greatly to their success. While Beam do occasionally step out and forge new territory, traditionally the Beam way has been to analyze what's doing well and do it better.

Games though aren't Beam's sole area of expertise. They also supply the entire games development industry with advanced tools that push the technology forward into exciting new areas.

There's no going back for Beam now. It's been a year since they listed publicly on the Stock Exchange and now the city of Melbourne boasts the Beam name big and bright on the skyline, courtesy of the 11 story building they now inhabit.

BEAM SOFTWARE

Australians playing to win. Beam Software, Melbourne House - by whatever name you know them they are the Australian legends of the international game development scene. Most people know Beam for the occasional game that's released under their own name, but scratch the surface and a revolution emerges. Chief scratcher Ben Marsio headed off to sunny Melbourne this month to find out what these talented world-beating Australians are up to.

Beam landmarks

- **1980.** Development starts for Sinclair ZX-80. Beam acquires license for computer rights to 'The Hobbit'.
- **1982.** 'The Hobbit' released for Sinclair Spectrum, acclaimed as first serious adventure game in Europe.
- **1983.** 'The Hobbit' reaches #1 in Europe, sales exceed 500,000 copies. Melbourne House releases 'Penetrator' for the TRS-80 in America.
- **1985.** 'Way of the Exploding Fist' the world's first martial arts computer game, is released on Commodore 64. It immediately reaches #1.
- **1990.** Beam starts development of CD ROM titles for the NEC PC Engine for Japanese market.
- **1993.** Beam completes 2 two games based on the FASA licenses: Shadowrun and 'Mechwarrior'.
- **1995.** EA Sports Cricket '96 best selling CD ROM sports title in Australia. 'The Game Was Loaded' released.
- **1996.** Beam is publicly listed on the Australian Stock Exchange.



The New Games

KKnD 2

The KKnD Room at Beam is one serious hangout for boys into toys. Littering the place are books on military aircraft and ground units, for both inspiration for the artists and simply because the guys think they're cool. Pencil sketches of the wildest, sexiest looking spacecraft plaster the walls - I queried these, wondering if I was looking at the new units planned for KKnD 2, but no, these were lunchtime doodles done for the amusement of the artists... Yes! Star Trek posters covered the remaining wall space, the team couldn't give a damn about the ideologies and intricacies of the Star Trek universe - no, they just think the spaceships look cool. It feels good and right to know that this is the environment where games are born. In comparison, the sterile and super-efficient ergonomic workspace Auran (Dark Reign) built now seems cold and scary.

The team were split between two jobs - most were putting the finishing touches on KKnD Extreme, while work on the Big Sequel; KKnD 2, continued at a gathering pace.

In the years since Westwood's revolutionary Command & Conquer arrived the Real Time Strategy genre is splitting into two distinct camps. Hardcore enthusiasts (the ones who play Red Alert at the highest speed setting online and never let their name slip below the top 5 on the ladder) are gravitating towards the complex and fully-featured games like Dark Reign and Total Annihilation, while the majority of players prefer the stronger single-player elements and better looking hand drawn art of games like KKnD. The sequel



Alien earths' 3D models look very intricate indeed.

expand this and offers a highly polished version of the original game. Enhancements to the game engine allow more advanced Line Of Sight settings, the new waypoint feature makes setting patrols easy yet powerful, while the new range of air units promises a completely new flavour to KKnD 2.

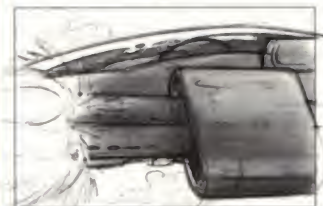
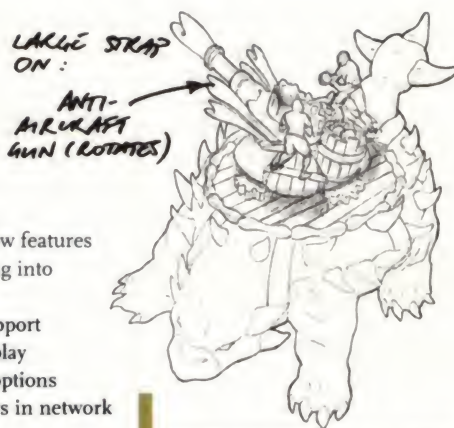


(main pic) terrain for KKnD 2.
(right) KKnD extreme

Storyline fine tuning carries over into the game proper, with the Survivor units now solely based on animals with huge mounted weapons on them.

Some of the sexy new features that Beam are building into KKnD 2 include:

- TCP/IP network support
- Improved network play
- Improved network options including CPU players in network games)
- More missions (45)
- More 21st century units
- Over 150 units and buildings
- Translucent explosions
- constructible units (customisable)



development sketches for KKnD2

Alien Earth

During my visit the final touches were being put on this stunning adventure/RPG. Being developed for release under the Playmates label, Alien Earth is built around a rich and compelling storyline that's sure to please sci-fi fans. It's set in a future where society has deteriorated and war is being waged between the few survivors of a devastating nuclear conflict. However, before humankind has the chance to wipe themselves out completely,

an evil alien race appears and enslaves who's left. You're Finn, a muscular, savvy kind of survivor. The game kicks in with you being sent into the bush, pursued by aliens intent of killing you for sport. Wey hey! Time to make a break and save the world for Finn, it seems.

Beam's artists have

gone to town on Alien Earth. The settings vary wildly and ooze atmosphere. From the moment the intro starts to the final encounter on the alien mothership, this is one very pretty game.

Using the now traditional 'hot cursor', Alien Earth takes the player beyond mindless clicking along a linear path. To keep things interesting there is a hefty dose of combat in the game. While it uses the mouse-click for a punch/ kick/ shoot method, there is enough variety with the baddies and your weaponry to keep you at it.

Beam unofficially consider Alien Earth to be a sequel to their classic Super Nintendo game Shadowrun, but with the power of the PC used to bring the story alive through a better interface and superior graphics and audio.

DethKarz

The DethKarz recipe is a pleasing theft of all the cool ideas we've seen in recent racing games. Think Mega Race's powerups, Pod's jaw-dropping 3D accelerated graphics and Moto Racer's smooth and fluid physics model.

Although DethKarz is over a year away from completion it is already showing awesome potential. The development team are fired up with enthusiasm and want to make this the best combat action racer around.

Embracing 3D hardware acceleration technology, the team say they won't even bother with a standard non-3D accelerated version. A



native 3Dfx version is planned, along with D3D and whatever other 3D cards look good towards the end of the development period.

At this early stage DethKarz is only a basic shell of a game, expect it out by Christmas next year under the Melbourne House name.

Some others...

Caesars Palace

Just to prove their versatility, the Beam team went off and made a casino gambling game for the Sony Playstation. Wow. What a talented bunch eh?

Norse by Norsewest

Sequel to the innovative Lost Vikings, this PC and Playstation game is doing very well for Interplay, for whom it was developed.

Full Court Press

It's a crazy mixed up world we live in. American megacorp Microsoft want a world-beating basketball game, so where do they turn? To Australia, to Beam specifically. While the game was a fine, slick effort, the real accomplishment was scoring the development deal from Microsoft. Beam have now won a well deserved international reputation as premier developers for all game styles, on all platforms.

Cricket 97 Ashes Edition

Not just another scenario disk cheapie, nooo, the number of new features in this enhancement rate

it as an excellent new game in its own right. Read the review in this issue, page 61.

Robot Madness

Funky puzzle games done right can be among the best games around. Here's Beam's contribution to the genre. Unlimited players over a TCP/IP connection should win a few fans when this one finally arrives.

Beam technology

Making international best selling games across all major platforms is one thing, but Beam's development applications are just as sexy, if not quite as well known.

FAMOUS

In the beginning there was no 'motion capture'. If a game programmer wanted a computer image of a person walking or a face talking they'd draw it frame by frame and render it in the end, hoping that it looked as real as possible. It rarely did. We were impressed nevertheless, as we were (and still are) with anything involving computer animation, but the look was wrong, a better way was needed.

Enter 'FAMOUS', or Facial Motion Utilities, along with MCM, or Motion Picture Magic. Together, these two Beam innovations

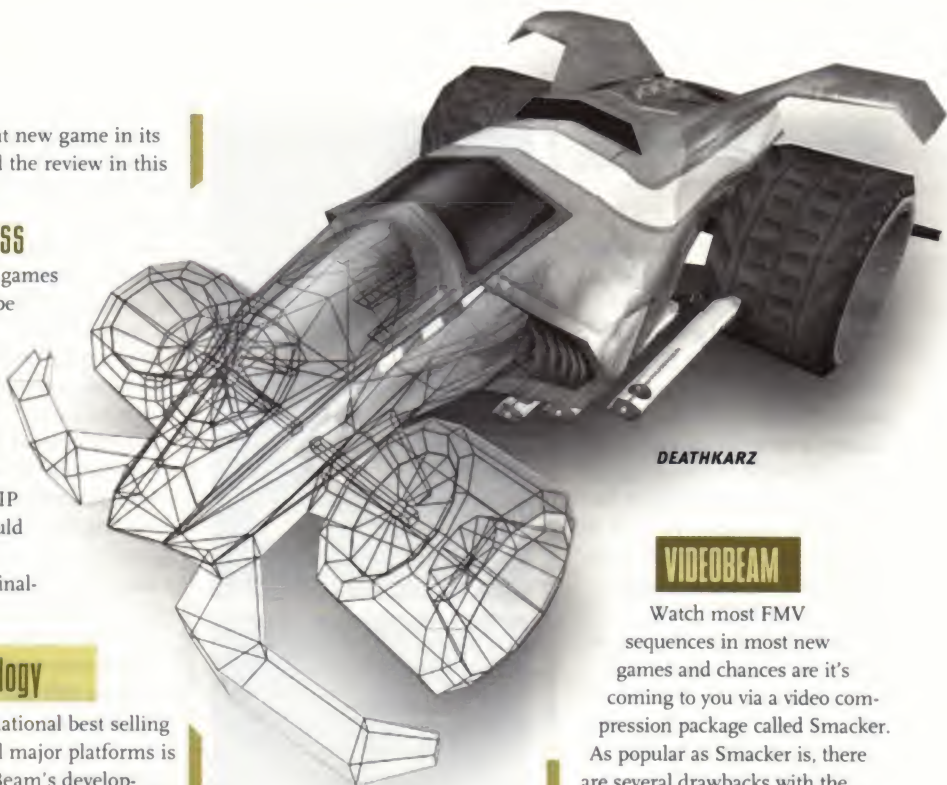
are giving the Australian company a reputation envied by many an overseas company who specialise in this area.

FAMOUS was unveiled at this year's E3 show in Atlanta. It was a major hit. At the end of each long day at E3 it was truly the only thing on show that could still draw an impressed crowd. The 'cool factor' had a lot to do with that. On one side of the demonstration there was an actor wearing the FAMOUS headset, his face dotted with the sensors the sys-

tem relies on. On the other side was a huge monitor showing a crazy cartoon character. The guy moved and talked and carried on, the cartoon thing mimicked his every move, his every expression. Eyebrows, curling lips, cheeks and jaw and much more. The effect was fantastic and more realistic than anything yet seen. And this was live and in realtime! In practise all captured motion would be carefully edited to produce a slick, polished result, but in realtime it looked pretty damn good and the actor hammed it up admirably for the passers by.

FAMOUS works by tracking the position of the dots on the actors face. In earlier motion capture systems an actors face or body would be dotted with live sensors, cables ran from each sensor and fed into a processor. It was an ugly, cumbersome system. The actors movement was severely restricted and the results often erratic. Now, with the Beam system, instead of cable-linked sensors the actor's body has reflective markers. A head-mounted camera points at the actor's face the whole time, accurately recording every subtle nuance. In the case of MCM, an operator records the actors full body movements.

The end results are superb. Movements are startlingly realistic and unusual and normally unfeasible head shapes like a long snouted dogs are easily catered for. Existing images can be imported from popular animation packages such as Softimage and 3DS MAX.



DEATHKARZ

VIDEOBEAM

Watch most FMV sequences in most new games and chances are it's coming to you via a video compression package called Smacker. As popular as Smacker is, there are several drawbacks with the technology and the industry is looking for a better way. As it happens. Beam think they have the answer.

Videobeam delivers a higher quality image than Smacker and has the happy bonus of working on a much lower-spec machine. That means you get better looking intros on a slower PC with a slower CD ROM. Beam have been using this proprietary system for a while now, but now interest is being sparked across the international scene and it looks like the Australian company has yet another world-beating innovation to its credit.

Beam - shine your light on me!

You're no doubt thinking right now: what a cool place to work! How do I get a cut of this action!

Easy. Beam need new talent, specifically an Associate Producer with detailed knowledge of Computer Games and previous experience in organising large scale complex projects.

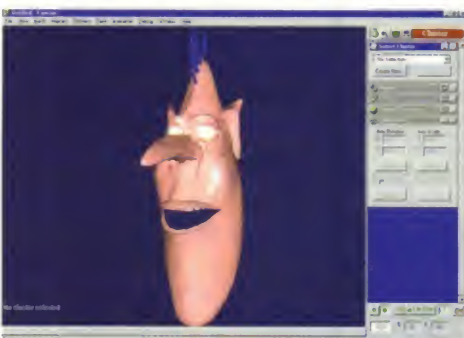
3D Artists with 2+ years experience computer animation and a strong familiarity with current 3D animation software.

C++ Windows Programmers with experience in either: Windows 95, Windows SDK + MFC, Direct X particularly Direct 3D or Direct Play. System Programmers with experience in real-time systems, multi-processor programming with low-level orientation, embedded systems, graphics particularly 3D.

They also need a Quality Assurance Manager with previous experience managing large teams of people. Ability to organize staff and resource planning.

If you're interested, write to:

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IGNITION



*The racing game for the
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IGNITION



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Screamer 2 meets Micro Machines

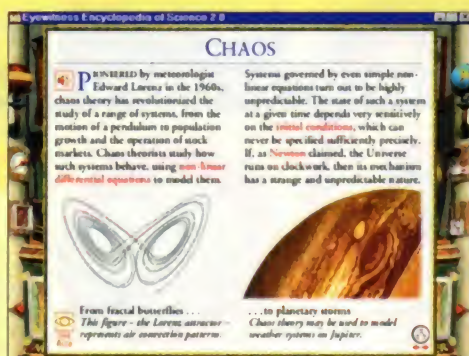


Win 95 and Dos



Eyewitness Encyclopedia of Science 2.0

DK Multimedia



Another attempt to make learning fun - they're not fooling us though!

Why can't learning be more fun?

Summarizing from dry books or copying that same text from the blackboard which the teacher copied Verbatim is how we've been doing it for years. Edutainers have been around for

years too, trying to make that process just a little bit more enjoyable. Some have been great, some abysmal. It's all in the presentation - a few have gone with the condescending "you are as thick as bricks" approach, aimed clearly at the younger market, while others take the "Science is a serious subject, let's treat it so" approach. A dull and boring experience is usually what follows.

Damnit! Science is fun! And learning from it can be better

than loading up and hitting the town on a Friday night. The Chaos Theory is just so sexy. A couple of hours getting intimate with the life cycle of a beetle can be a purely mind-bending experience. Encyclopedia of Science 2.0 from DK is filled with information of that ilk. Divided into four main categories; Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Life Sciences, EoS 2.0 covers a generous chunk of popular science - nothing too complex yet at the same time not at all basic.

All that can be expected from a multimedia learning tool is here. Stern English accents taking you through those terms which no one can pronounce, beautiful pictures, hyperlinks, Internet compatibility, and text that is friendly to people of any age (though the younger ones may yawn sooner than most). Also included is a rather fun multiplayer quiz, plenty of referencing material

and charts to look up, and profiles on the who's who of the scientific world. The video clips are the only things letting down this title as they seem rather inappropriate in some cases and not very informative in others. No matter, they're still pretty to look at. Otherwise, the Encyclopedia of Science 2.0 is a neat, interesting package that is bound to inform. While it's not exactly a roller coaster ride through the annals of time and science, it's got the one thing that has got the humble book running for cover - hyperlinked information.



The ultimate James Bond - an interactive dossier

Dataflow / MGM Interactive



"Bond, James Bond. A dry Martini, shaken, not stirred, and take your clothes off too, please my dear" "SLAPI"

Whatever your feelings about the James Bond movies, whether you loved them as a child or hate them unreservedly, you'd have to admit that this is a marvellous effort from MGM interactive. They have managed to produce a

piece of entertaining software that's densely packed with enough information to satisfy even the most dedicated Bond fan (if, that is, there are any), along with presentation that is at once intuitive, extremely well thought out, and also very pretty to boot.

The Bond formula, which has been around for 35 years beginning with Dr No in 1962 hasn't changed all that much, and the CD's don't try to make them into anything they aren't - included with each 'mission' section are some of the reviews of the movie, and they don't just reprint the good ones, some are actually quite scathing in their criticism (especially from the more contemporary Bond movies).

In each of the many different and searchable sections available is a great deal of information, including behind the scenes footage and little known facts, like the one about the stuntman who was paid a couple of hundred dollars extra

to fall on top of a real shark (now that's dedication to duty), or the stuntman who got his foot chopped off by a helicopter. It's not all doom and giggles though, there's plenty of material about Connery, Lazenby, Moore, et al and some fairly amusing anecdotes about their personal habits too.

With sections on the individual movies, the gadgets, the enemies, and of course the Bond women as well as a very nifty quiz section and links to fan and official web sites, this is the complete package for anyone who is even remotely interested in the Bond universe.



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Crime Killer

Derek dela Fuente

Category	Racing
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Interplay
Available	End 97

Yet another racing game you may suspect, but the track record of Chris Butler, the head of the company, is about as impressive as you will get, going back a long way and with more than a couple of legendary games to his credit. This is a 3 in one game with 3 vehicles to ride plus a few surprises. I now pass you over to the marginally insane and highly amusing Pixelogic!

Are you the Chris Butler of Space Harrier?

It's a fair cop guv, yes, I was the culprit. I also hereby confess to being responsible for WaterWorld, Putty Squad, Super Putty, Turbo Charge, Power Drift, Thunderblade, 720, Ghosts N Goblins, Commando, amongst other crimes.

Can you give us some background on the development team and its personnel?

We got together over the net to join Chris on this venture, leaving behind loving families, crying

Rock and Roll

The player will get a first person perspective of the action but you also have two other camera modes to switch to if you want to get a better overview of the action (in car, outside car and one akin to that of Ridge Racer, which is right down on the front of the car). The cameras have their own AI so they will pick up the best action and even pan in on the action to truly immerse you into the game.



babies, etc. We quickly moved on to our rat infested, em, I mean "Executive offices" in Sheffield city centre where we have crafted a game of unimaginable quality and excellence. We don't need all that fancy shmansy stuff, like windows that open, and fresh air. We live on the edge: the edge of poverty and the threat of eviction.



Where does the team's expertise lie?

Please define 'expertise'. The rest of us just have various levels of coffee preparation expertise. There are some people here that can do things with pixels and others that do boring stuff, writing code I think, luckily we only have 2 of them, and they don't say much. When they do, the normal people just nod knowingly until they pass by, or pass out.

What made you come up with a racing action game - there are so many similar games around, what do you feel makes it better than the rest?

We felt it necessary to unleash a real arcade police driving game, not some pseudo car sim with realistic brake pad physics. It's quite a fast little blighter too.

Have you written your own map editor and how sophisticated is it?

Our map editor is pretty advanced, we can preview at any res, it's got ray traced shadows... advanced modelling tools such as modify/ vertex/ 2dscale. Yeah, those guys at



Autodesk really know their stuff: we use 3d Studio.

Is the AI within the game an integral feature of the game?

We are very proud of the AI in the game, I'm glad you noticed it. The 2 player mode has some of the most sophisticated AI ever seen in a game.

There are some great particle effects in the game, did you write them yourself within your engine or are they pulled in from Studio Max?

Using advanced inverse kinematic algorithms and cutting edge motion capture equipment we threw things



at Chris, capturing every nuance as they ricochet off his shiny forehead. Some of the others were done in Max and Lightwave. Chris did a bit of coding in this one as well, in between dodging projectiles of various densities.

How many different tracks, vehicles and terrains are there? Expand a bit on the facets of the 3 main vehicles.

We're trying to get as many environments in there as possible at the moment, then the gameplay bits will be slotted in. We have about 7 at the moment. The Police Car, Bike and Wing have differing handling characteristics. The car has 4 wheels, the bike has 2



Lighting effects look pretty spectacular, and a nice range of vehicles to crash into put these to great effect

Mean and Moody

The circuits you move around are moody and full of surprises. At every turn of a corner a new detailed building presents itself and the attention to detail is even more surprising when you notice that the car's speed and the update of the frame rate does not drop at all. Lighting effects, billowing smoke and many other particle effects give the game a moody and exciting backdrop and Crime Killer is charged with gunfire and explosions.

wheels, and.. Em, the wing has wings and no wheels at all, I think, but don't quote me on that.

Would you give the readers a brief on the objectives and scenario?

Well, we decided on a post-modern perspective allowing the player to decide what to do. Oh no, I mean it's a totally immersive virtual cyberworld set in the future with delicately sculpted gameplay elements that interface at a subconscious level, a bit like Stones' Bitter. Will you be using any new joy-



Control Freak

Crime Killer places the player in full control of one of three vehicles, each of which will be pertinent to the setting. You could be driving along the ground or flying around skies, and switching vehicles is just a mere part of the impressive gameplay.

sticks or controllers, especially the new feedback one from Microsoft?

Could be, don't really know about that one. It's not really fair to ask me about that, I mean, how the hell would I know? What a question! I suppose you get your kicks from all these controllers, then? Eh? Well I can tell ya matey they're a bloody nightmare, and also some spotty youth can sit in front of the telly all day dribbling and pretending he's a policeman, when he's really has no life at all and his mother irons his underpants... and socks.

What will be the base machine - PC for the game?

Hmm, we are hoping the upward trend in processor power is sustained or even accelerates this year, allowing us to have a flat shaded version available for Winter '98. Currently, I should think a Pentium Pro 200 with 64Mb RAM might be able to handle the wireframe mode (unlit of course).

Are there any discernible differences between the Playstation and PC version - can you list them?

The Playstation version will run on any television, we have built in compatibility with large living room televisions right down to some of the older black and white models with cig burns on the top. The PC version will require an outlay of around 5,000 dollars and 10 years of assembly experience to get it to run. The frame rate will be eyesight dependant,

Crime Killer allows the player to drive/pilot various vehicles (standard sports car shown), in any colour, as long as it's blue

the blind will notice almost no performance degradation.

Although it is an arcade game, how much attention have you placed on the physics and inertia of the vehicles?

We took into account Newton's 1st, 2nd and 3rd Laws of Motion as well as his unpublished 4th Law which states that if the 1st three Laws don't work then it's OK to bodge it. We all messed around with it, gave our opinions, had a secret ballot, then let Chris do it how he liked.

The speed of the game is impressive, are there any tricks or clever routines you have devised?

Yes, one trick we found was to have a large fan blowing in the player's face. This gave that seat-of-the-pants, wind-in-the-hair, illusion of speed we were all trying to achieve. We also found we enjoyed the game more when Paddy ran past the computer at top speed, making a police siren noise and shouting things like "You won't take me alive, copper!" and "Did I put sugar in your coffee, Sir?"

Neat or whot!

All the roads, walls and scenery have used texturing to great effect which portrays a very realistic look. You have day and night missions and the skill factor gradually gets harder as you progress and learn more tricks and manoeuvres. The road surfaces have contours so the arcade experience is heightened with some stomach churning rides. Speed and arcade action is the main focus of the game - pure unadulterated fun!

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Flying Nightmares II

All you ever wanted to know and more about the next level of Combat Flight Sims.

Category	Flight Sim
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	BlueMoon
Available	Xmas

Flying Nightmares could end up one of the biggest flight sim games of the year. Not only does it offer the usual impressive features within a flight sim game, it combines these with a good dose of strategy as well giving the genre a fresh, balanced mix. The product manager and inspiration behind the game is Bryan Walker, ex veteran pilot, who understand every aspect of flying and warfare. Who better to fire some questions at than the man himself!

How have you handled V/STOL on the Harrier?

The V/STOL characteristics of the Harrier are reproduced faithfully in both the flight models, as well as all aspects of the gameplay. "Viffing" (Vectoring In Forward Flight) is a valid ACM tactic that players can use to increase their turn rates, and the vertical takeoff and landing capabilities of the Harrier are also emphasised in many missions.

Are multiple radar modes to be supported, and will the RWR show "right" (i.e. radar will only show up if the emitter is pointed at your a/c)?

We're paying particular attention to modelling the radar's capabilities and modes, without swamping the player with too many key-strokes. Our goal is to provide the player with a truly accurate representation of the radar's capabilities, while still allowing them to enjoy

the flying portions of the game.

How has terrain masking and ground clutter been implemented?

The terrain masking and ground clutter are based on real-time line-of-sight calculations, as well as considerations to the real-world limitations of the various radar types. Some radars excel at detecting very low/very slow targets, and others are more suited to long-range high-altitude targets. The player will have to learn how the tactics required to face each type of radar, as well as learning to read his own radar display's nuances.

How has the tactical side been improved? Does it play like Red Alert?

We feel the multiplayer "Commandant" feature is going to be the most popular part of FN2. Imagine an environment along the lines of "Red Alert" with more realism and options, with up to 16



Only the advent of 3D acceleration has allowed this sim to be developed



The Cobra possesses special recon ground attack capabilities

players flying Harriers and Cobras over a very dynamic battlefield!

Our primary focus on the strategic aspect of "Commandant" was to increase the realism and control of the ground units while still keeping the action fast. We don't want "Commandant" to bog down into something along the lines of a traditional wargame, but rather, give the players the tools to create their own battles in real-time, while co-ordinating with other players actually flying from the simulation perspective in support of these battles.

Will the game support 3D boards?

Yes. FN2 currently supports the Rendition, 3DFX, ATI, and S3 ViRGE chipsets with native drivers. The other boards will be supported via Direct3D.

What's the fastest system you've tested the game on, and what frame rate was observed?

We've been working with Intel on an AGP-specific version of Flying Nightmares 2, and have some 266MHz systems here in our offices. We've observed frame rates upwards of 90 frames per second with full graphics details on.

How has the terrain been modelled in 3D mode? Can you utilise is during flight?

The terrains can be quite large, up to 50,000 square kilometers. We're using grids of 200 square meters, and applying textures over those. Our goal here is to provide detailed, rolling terrain that the players can enjoy flying low and fast over.

What dynamic cockpit viewing system have you used?

We've developed a unique cockpit system that combines the best of "static" cockpits, with a full virtual cockpit. Players can select between either mode at any time, with nearly seamless changes.

Can you contact other pilots? If so, how?

One of our primary goals is to provide as much symbology on the screen as we can to avoid the need for the players to constantly type messages on the keyboards. The



The "Commandant's" screen



Harrier rocket attacks should make for a demanding and attractive distraction

system we're using for this is still "secret," so I don't want to give away too much information there...

How much and what type of tactical AI has been utilised for friend/foe?

The AI in FN2 ranges from the very simplistic for a typical truck or cultural vehicle, to quite elaborate and aggressive for aircraft. Our goal with the AI is to make something that's challenging, but still believable. Anyone can make an AI beat a human 100% of the time. We want the AI to fly like a good human opponent really would.

How has the terrain been modelled in 3D mode? Can you utilise is during flight?

The terrains can be quite large, up to 50,000 square kilometers. We're using grids of 200 square meters, and applying textures over those. Our goal here is to provide detailed, rolling terrain that the players can enjoy flying low and fast over.

Will there will be multiple friendly a/c airborne with you? How will they be controlled? Pre-set flight path? "Jump" into the cockpit?

In FN2's campaign game, the play-

er will have to operate in concert with dozens of other aircraft in each mission, just as in real life. These other aircraft have missions to perform that interconnect with the player's mission, so sticking with the briefing is very important. In the "Commandant" game, there are several computer-controlled aircraft that can be used, such as the E-3C Hawkeye command-and-control plane, the EH-60 Quick Fix electronic warfare helicopter, the CH-46 Sea Knight utility helicopter, and the Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.

What do you feel are the strong selling points of Flying Nightmare?

The strongest selling point for Flying Nightmares 2 are its attention to the subtle details and excitement



Low & fast through a valley to avoid radar



Developer Bryan Walker about to leave for work

of multiplayer air combat. We're not interested in creating a dry, boring recreation of a super-plane where you shoot targets 50 miles away with missiles that always hit. FN2 focuses on immersing the player into the "down and dirty aspect of real-world combat aviation, not the pristine environment of "future fighters."

Can you also give the readers an insight into your past - you are an ex-veteran - did your experience help in the making of the game? (what vehicles did you fly)

I'm a former AH-64A Apache pilot, and flew combat missions during Operation Desert Storm. I have 2,000 hours of flight time, most in AH-64s. I've also flown in a variety of other fixed- and rotary-

wing aircraft, including a variety of aerobatics planes, fighters, and even a couple of jets.

What type of display - resolution will the game have and will it utilise all 3D cards?

We're designing the game for 640x480, 65,000 colour display. FN2 will take advantage of all the major 3D cards.

How limited are you to working within the restraints of a high end PC and do you have to ensure it also runs on say a P75/100? If so it this hard to achieve?

The minimum machine specification is a Pentium 90, which should be able to run the game at around 15 frames per second.

Derek dela Fuente





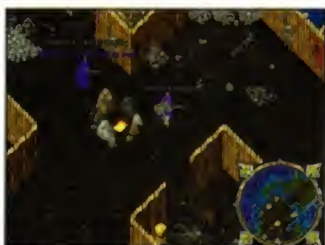
Ultima Online

Beta test report by March Stepnik

Category	Online RPG
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Origin
Available	Oct/Nov

"Am I the only one who wants to have a party after the Beta is over at the Austin Origin place - just party party party, and then take an icepick or something and hack the shit out of the servers??" - Amanda "Silvy" Fry.

If there was ever a statement that could sum up the beta test, this would be the most appropriate (if not slightly manic) one. After many hours, if not weeks, of donning on my virtual loincloth and traversing the land of Britannia, I can happily say that Ultima Online is, and will be, the ultimate online experience to date. However, the beta test was not without its fair share of hardship. Character wipes every second or third day, plenty of game freezes and crashes, as well as regular down time to the mighty (and mythical) UO servers. Then there was the lag. The best piece of news I have to report coming out of the test is that indeed Ultima Online WILL be playable from over here, on the big official UO servers themselves, located at Origin HQ. I used a 28.8k modem with a fairly decent ISP, and using the ping test to the UO servers, managed times ranging from 500ms to 700ms. Prior to the test Origin claimed that times over 500ms will result in an experience that while playable, would not be exactly smooth or



(top to bottom) Garriott and Long go on a world tour! Avatus and Polvo examine the remains of a recent bloodbath in Trinsic. Dark, dank, dungeon (Covetous). The forge - a popular hangout in Britain. The Nobility storm the orc fort, Cove.

headache free. My first few hours online were accompanied with little to no lag (or if there was, it wasn't large enough to cause an worry). As the test progressed lag did become a problem, but this was mostly a result of messy code on Origin's part and other server side problems. Most of the lag issues were addressed and fixed, so one can only be optimistic with the coming of the final release.

Other than that, it's hard to make a real call on Ultima Online. The game is dependant on the virtual ecology so much, that tinkering with

the code either way changes the enjoyment level of UO drastically. At the beginning of the test, animals and monsters were minimal, and not very dangerous. Play consisted of banding with other play-

ers, scouring the land for something to kill, and avoiding killers (who were in abundance with the limited amount of quests and things to do). Towards the end of the test (which is still underway at time of press), the game has become much more difficult - creatures are now abundant, vicious, and deadly. The focus shifted from gathering cool items to just being able to survive.

When it comes down to it though, Origin have laid down the foundations to a beautiful gaming experience. The landmass is huge, there are many, many things to occupy yourself with, and gameplay is complex enough so as to prevent boredom or dissatisfaction setting in too quickly. Ultimately, it's up to the players themselves, as well Origin's ability to generate interesting quests, that will make or break UO. So far so good. With the final version of the game due for release a few weeks after the conclusion of the test, it isn't long now! We'll bring you a detailed review after the game is released.

March Stepnik



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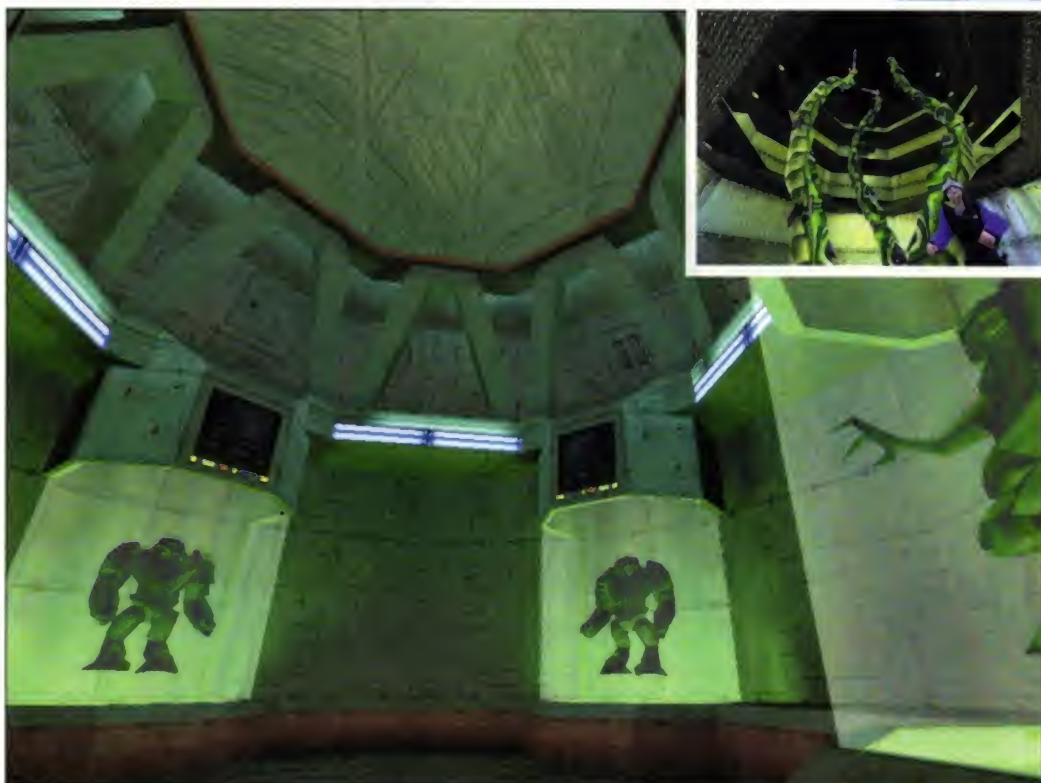


Half-Life

Category	3D action shooter
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Valve / Sierra
Available	late '97 (or early '98)

While you might think that we whinge about the number of Quake and C&C clones a little, we really don't mind all that much, because the more there are the more chance that there'll be some decent ones in the pile. And speaking of decent ones, Half-Life looks pretty damn awesome indeed. In fact, when it was previewed at E3 recently, it was voted 'Best action game', 'Best take on first person action', and tied with Quake II for 'Most impressive graphics', which should give you some idea of how very cool this game from Valve software is looking.

Part of the reason for the 'best take on action game' award was because it actually has a decent storyline. Now, action games don't really need a storyline, but it's still nice to have one. See, the story is that you're a worker at a top secret mission and make a breakthrough discovery closely followed by a very silly decision which unleashes hordes of nasty alien beasts in your office. 'Piece of piss!', you're thinking, 'did it in Doom, done it in Duke, so what?'. Ahh, but them government types found out about your mistake and don't want anyone else to find out about it, and so of



Beautiful graphics and a decent storyline too. Big time



Sort of a cross between a malformed dog & a one-eyed fly. Scary



course decide to kill you. Hence you're not only dealing with nasty alien creatures, but agents equipped with some pretty cool weaponry too.

Valve are pretty excited about their AI, which will adapt to the player and hunt in packs, as well as utilise their abilities to the utmost. Government snipers for example, are equipped with infra-red goggles, so hiding in the shadows won't do you much good at all if they're around. The graphics, too, are something Valve are pleased about, with 16 bit rendering in software, monsters made out of up to 6000 polygons, coloured lighting and advances in character animation. Add this to Valve's assertion that the game will be playable on an average spec PC (though it will have GL, Direct3D, and MMX enhancements as well), and you're looking at a very, very cool game. More details as soon as we get our hands on a copy.



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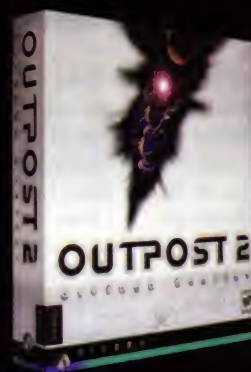
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Total Annihilation



Combining beautiful hand-drawn terrain with 3D line-of-sight

Category	Real time strategy
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Cavedog
Available	Late '97

For those of you interested in this genre, here's a little tip. If, in the category section, we put 'C&C clone' then it usually means we're not all impressed, but if we go for the 'real time strategy' bit, then we generally think that the game has genuinely improved upon what C&C had to offer. Total Annihilation is most definitely in the 'real time strategy' category, it looks like a game worthy of comparison to Dark Reign - and you know how excited we feel about that one.

Essentially the base tenets of the genre are in place. It's your average 'one school of thought versus another school of thought' scenario, and rather than have a deep philosophical discussion about their differences, the two have decided to go for a full scale war. Some time in the future when the galaxy has been conquered and colonised, those in power (named the Core) have decided that nobody should die anymore. Thus they decree that everyone's brain should be transported into a bio-mechani-



Prozac to calm him down. As with Dark Reign (and the comparisons between the two are destined to continue, for better or worse) there are a host of features and options, too many to explain in detail, but here's a list of some of them. You might want to keep the Prozac handy...

cal unit so that those nasty body things won't stop you living forever. Not everyone was overjoyed at this proclamation, and so they ran away to the furthest reaches of the galaxy where like minded individuals banded together, calling themselves the 'Arm'. The two parties played war with each other for a while, until both were decimated and had run down to the last of their resources, which is where the game begins.

We've had a beta version to play with, and even though it only had a few levels and was far from completion, the day after he took it home to play Big Benny Mansill ran into the office screaming hysterically and proclaiming that it was one of the best games of the year - we almost had to resort to

- Fully articulated, run time generated 3d units and buildings, and true 3d terrain
- Large maps, and even larger maps for PCs with 32mb ram
- Over 150 units (land, sea, and air), and 25 single player missions per side
- Full multiplayer support (modem, network, serial, tcp/ip) plus skirmish modes
- Also the choice of which team to join in multiplayer as well as a 'watch' mode
- Shared resources, information and units between allies
- New units downloadable from Total Annihilation web site on a weekly basis
- Unit abilities to include cloaking, psionics, teleportation, and more
- aircraft carriers (!), floating facto-

- ries and amphibious tanks
- configurable fog of war settings
- runs in 640x480 resolution or higher
- And heaps more

To be honest though, it's put us in a bit of a quandary. For the past few months there haven't been all that many great games coming out, only the odd one or two. In the near future you, and us, can look forward to Total Annihilation, Dark Reign, and Age of Empires - and that's just in the real time strategy genre! TA looks easily good enough to hold it's own in that kind of company though, even to the extent of maybe raining on Dark Reign's parade a little, and it's one we're looking forward to a hell of a lot. We'll get you a full review as soon as we get the full version and can drag ourselves away from the game long enough to write about it. You may be waiting a while...





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FIGHTER SQUADRON

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It's really different out here.

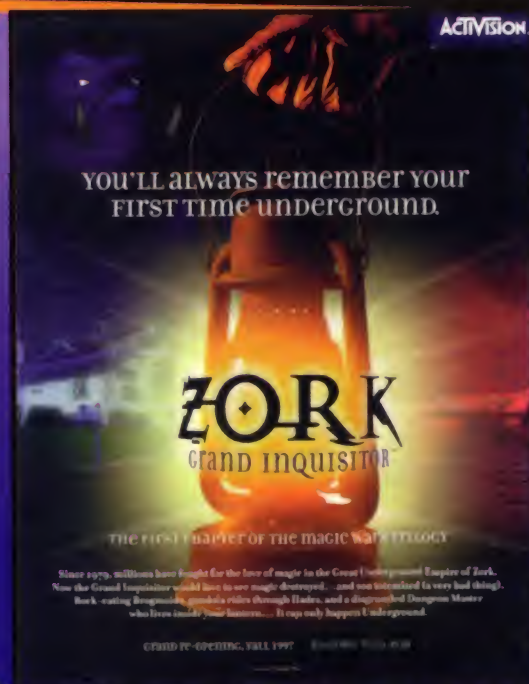
NETSTORM

ISLANDS AT WAR



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PC/CD ROM

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<http://www.activision.com>



Mageslayer

Category	Action
Players	1-4
Publisher	Raven Software
Available	October



Raven Software are best known for Heretic, the excellent Hexen, and the upcoming pants-wetter Hexen II. Hexen II will require a graphics accelerator card, and while we continue to stress the importance of getting such a tool of joy, many of us just don't have one yet. Raven are bringing us a straight up action fest with a similar fantasy feel to Hexen, using a top down perspective (similar to the Gauntlet). Mageslayer will feature four characters to choose from, each with their own unique attacks and abilities. Skill development will also make its way in the gameplay. This one shouldn't tax your computer, so expect an action fest with the special touch from Raven.

Shadow Warrior

Category	Action
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	3D Realms
Available	November



Developing Prey on the side, 3D Realms have also been at work at another first person shooter, with the focus being on fun and interactivity rather than a totally chilling experience. Using the Advanced Build Engine, this title will feature true 3D environment (rooms above rooms), and for a change, will allow players to control tanks, bulldozers, forklifts and the like to wreak havoc. Puzzles will also feature heavily in this title, complimented by the trademark gore, humour, interactivity of 3D Realms. Plenty of graphical tweaks will be present, no word yet on accelerator support.

NetStorm

Category	Action/Strategy
Players	1-8
Publisher	Activision
Available	November



Fancy a bit of sacrifice to enable the flow of fresh blood and power to your command? Like a bit of strategy with your action? Tired of wasting time with the programmed AI? NetStorm is an action/strategy game designed primarily for multiplayer (though single player games will be available to practice with), in real-time form. Rather than vast expanses of land, players take to ruling islands that float in the sky. One of the main mid-term goals is to capture your opponent's High Priest, which you then sacrifice for access to more powerful units and more challenging levels of play. The development team have gone all out to prevent tank rush tactics, aiming at rewarding those players that using their noggin' a bit more.

Virtua Fighter 2

Category	Fighting
Players	1-2
Publisher	Sega PC
Available	November



Virtua Fighters is back on the PC! This time though, you get the much more enjoyable sequel. VF2 not surprisingly has seen a much more enthusiastic treatment by the development team, and the end result is a title that may end up being very close to its arcade cousin. All the characters, plenty of video modes and screen sizes, and rumours of a graphics accelerated patch to be released after the initial game hits the shelves. Multiplayer (via modem, LAN, etc) is included with this one, as are plenty of other options to help breathe some long term life into a style of game that rarely makes it big except on console systems.

Manx TT

Category	Racing
Players	1-8
Publisher	Tantalus/SEGA
Available	October



Take a break from Moto Racer (if you can), for the arcade show stopper Manx TT is coming our way, 3D accelerated version in check. The big question though, is how Manx TT will compare to the brilliant Moto. From the screenshots we saw, Moto Racer has the visual edge. That's not a nail in Manx's coffin though, for if the arcade playability is faithfully reproduced, we could have another winner on our hands. This one features 8 bikes, four courses, time trial modes, and a special Superbike challenge that gives you access to further bikes with very "arcadey" capabilities.

Island of Dr. Moreau

Category	Adventure
Players	1
Publisher	Psygnosis
Available	November



Something fresh is needed in the adventure gaming genre. Visuals and captivating storyline now are a must, as we just won't tolerate much less than that. Is it surprising that many of the traditional adventure developers are going the 3D action route? Island of Dr. Moreau features beautiful graphics, a storyline that could be entertaining (remember the movie was a flop), and freaky kind of plot. What catches our attention most though is the challenge factor. Apparently, Island will be no walk in the park. For an adventure game, this can only be a good thing.

Dark Vengeance

Category Adventure/Action
Players 1
Publisher Reality Bytes
Available December



This one is described as an adventure game, but seems to borrow heavily from the action, fighting and RPG genres for its rather unique style of play. Players get to choose from 5 character classes, each of which has access to over 12 different weapons. There are attributes that you can build up as you progress, as well as over one hundred spells to master and use. Graphically, Dark Vengeance looks a treat, and will (like most everything heading out of developers now) utilize the power of a graphics accelerator. Other than that, the addition of 32 multiplayer support is what's causing ripples around this title.

Populous 3

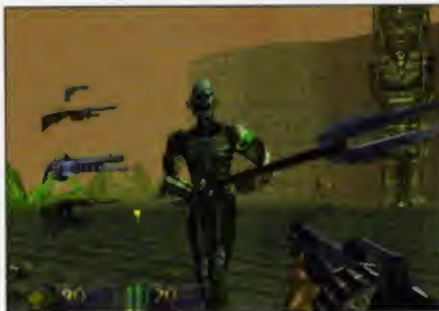
Category Strategy
Players 1
Publisher EA/Bullfrog
Available October



Populous was an absolute classic and spawned many a second rate imitator. It was, you see, the first "god-sim" where you used your divine influence (and down right dirty tactics) to bend and shape the land to your will. Bullfrog are bring the magic back to our PC's with a new generation of populous. Not just a sequel or a update, the Third Coming promises a new approach to playing god, making it more tactical and strategic. Lush SVGA graphics (including support for a 1280x1024x256 mode), multiple views, true 3D environment and high detail are featured, as well as more user friendly interface. Start praying!

Turok

Category 1st person action
Players 1
Publisher Acclaim/Sculptured
Available Xmas



This is the second of the Nintendo 64 to PC crossovers and it looks a goody. It's popularity on the Nintendo 64 can be attributed to the simple fact there were no other first person shooters out at the time. That and it had drop dead gorgeous graphics, plenty of weapons and nasty beasts. The PC version, which will only run with a graphics accelerator, promises to keep all the charm of the Nintendo 64 version and then some. Is that enough though? The PC market already has enough Quake wanna-bes out there, so we're all keen to see just what this version of Turok is offering.

Septerra Core

Category RPG
Players 1
Publisher Rabid Entertainment
Available March '98



RPG's are getting a bit more attention these days, with a whole heap of them out there and many on the way. This RPG however, promises to play much like a console RPG (that is, pretty graphics, great storyline, minimal RPG elements), and early reports compare Septerra Core to Final Fantasy VII and Phantasy Star. 200 locations (not tile based), pre-rendered characters and NPC's, and a battle engine that combines real time and turn based methods. Running in 640x480 screen resolution in 16 bit colour, Septerra Core looks a very pretty RPG, even if it may be more of an adventure game.

Fire Team

Category Online Action
Players 2-TBA
Publisher Multitude
Available November



Online gaming is finally beginning to take off, with a multitude of developers out there working on their own version of the next big online thing. Multitude is one of them. Described as a multiplayer, online X-Com, FireTeam is set to change gaming in a slightly different way than say something like UO will. A powerful editor will be included that can totally change the game being played to almost any scenario you can think of, all in a manner of days! Other than that, FireTeam will make heavy use of real time voice communication as you play, and rewards teamplay more than it does loner hotshots.

Shadows of the Empire

Category Action
Players 1
Publisher LucasArts
Available November



This originally appeared on the Nintendo 64 soon after the machines release. It was a Star Wars title - it looked Star Wars, sounded like Star Wars, even played like the film: great looking but rather tacky. Amused at hearing of a release on the PC, our greatest hopes lie in that Lucas Arts will do some engine tweaking and bring us a game that plays a little better than it does on the console. The game marks a new chapter in the Star Wars saga, set after Empire and before Jedi. Made up of over 5 different types of levels, you'll be taking control of a snowspeeder, the Outrider, a swoop bike, as well as a number of doomy sections. A pure action fest, Shadows will require a graphics accelerator to get it running.



PC PowerPlay
GOLD
90%+



I am the Lizard King! Jim Morrison was just a pretender to my throne!



LANDS OF LORE II

It's just a little bit late, so praise be to the game gods that the most awaited RPG in gaming history is a magical, special and BIG gaming experience.

For me, the best games are those that transcend genre divisions. I'm thinking here of, say, Tomb Raider, Twinsen's Odyssey or MDK, to name a diverse few. Games that can offer more than just the one type of experience, that escape the strict boundaries enforced by "producers" and succeed in creating something wholly other. You can't pin these games down. You can't say Tomb Raider is like anything (except for the banal



Ooh, ain't it pretty!

Quake comparison that was popular at the time), Tomb Raider just is.

Lands Of Lore: Guardian Of Destiny attempts a similar feat. My lazy shorthand description would be - part Daggerfall, part System Shock, part Hexen, part Lemmings, part Phantasmagoria, part God knows what else. And yet, not only does this seem inadequate and, I suspect, of little use anyway - it is also missing the point entirely.

Lands is all of these things and none. Lands is a completely separate entity in itself. It's not the perfect game, it's not that elusive Holy Grail of Gameplay. In a year, though, of admittedly few exceptional releases (thus far), Lands shines like the silver blade of a gleaming, jewel-encrusted long sword in the morning sun.

Why? Because Westwood have

crafted a tale of heroic adventure on an epic scale. Not for them the randomly-generated quests and dungeons of Daggerfall or Diablo. No, Lands has a gripping main story, a plot sufficiently strong to topple a troop of trolls. This is the stuff of Gods and curses and mythology and vast armies. Apart from a rare few slow sections, mostly you will feel as if you are forging a great legend as you play.

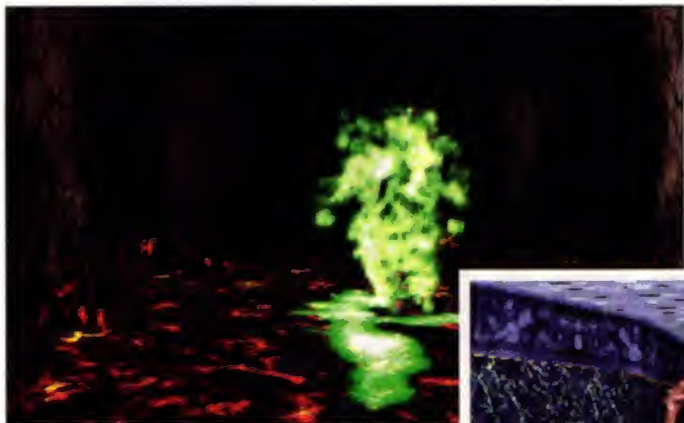
Morph or me?

That legend centres around Luther, the character you play throughout - that's his portrait you



Luther fails to heed the fire warnings and starts a blaze in the middle of the jungle

can see in the bottom right corner of all the grabs. Or not, as the case may be. Luther is the only son of the late Scotia, an evil sorceress, who passed on to you the magical Nether Mask shortly before her death. Unfortunately, something went wrong (well, that's what happens when you mess around with the



(right) The museum guard. He won't mind if you steal a few artifacts

space/time continuum, kids) and Luther becomes cursed by the mask. Instead of being able to harness its power, you find yourself at its merest whim. Now it may transform you into a giant and very ugly ogre, while then might find you as a tiny lizard.

Obviously, most of the time you will be your normal human self, but for large parts of the game you won't be. So it is during these times that you have to take advantage of each form's varying abilities. As an ogre, you can scare people away (good for enemies, but not those with whom you wish to talk), lift or move heavy objects, cause bridges to collapse under your weight, and so on. In lizard form, you can move quickly, scurry through small cracks

in rocks or under doors, avoid big enemies

(unless they step on you), but face the danger of being beaten up by cockroaches, etc.

Westwood state that many such transformations are pretty much random, but my experience tells me that this ain't the case. With the majority of shape-changes you can be almost guaranteed that you will be able to put to use your different skills somewhere nearby. Even if you don't accomplish anything, you can be assured that when you return to that location in future the same change will most probably occur.

Adventure returns!

Pursuing Luther throughout his quest to remove the cursed Nether Mask, is Belial and his minions. Belial is a fallen God who needs such scarce magical power to return from exile. Consequently, Luther will have to destroy Belial once and



for all, if he himself is to become free. Despite the fact that there is this one major plot strand and little in the way of subplots, Lands doesn't feel like a linear game.

Clever and, to some extent, manipulative design is the key. Splitting the game into chapters, or levels, and arranging these levels around "hubs" (a la Hexen) is how Lands succeeds in this respect. The story is fluid, meaning that you can visit people or locations within the current level in virtually any order, and such encounters will vary depending upon what you have done previously. Each level is enormous and the amount and degree of interaction with other characters and, especially, the environment, is phenomenal.

Truly, it is impossible to do this game justice in a mere two-page review. I haven't really even begun to scratch the surface and already I have to start summing things up. Lands Of Lore 2 is perhaps the most complete game I've played. It offers an accessible RPG with plenty of depth, but none of the stats and dreary dungeon hacks that put so many sane people off. A glittering adventure without the frustration of illogical puzzles and desperate plot. An action game with brains and the best 2D bitmapped "3D" engine around. Impressive cut-scenes and video footage seamlessly overlaid onto the game screen. And so what if the control system is occasionally a bit too fiddly?

In attempting to reach a wider audience, Westwood haven't "dumbed-down" Lands Of Lore 2, but they have gone to a new level. THIS IS A GAME.

David Wildgoose



How about this then? A gorgeous, non-linear game with excellent FMV sequences as well. They said it'd never happen...

92%

Category RPG
Players 1
Publisher Virgin/Westwood
Price STBA
Rating TBA
Available Now

For A grand adventure striding across an epic stage. Remarkable design with so many good ideas implemented perfectly. Gorgeous "old-school" bitmaps, even in VGA. Challenging and hugely varied gameplay.

Against Controls could have been better, and those actors ham things up a tad too often for my liking.

Need & Want Final requirements weren't set at the time of going to press, but a low-res DOS version, a high res Win 95 version and a 3Dfx version are all said to be on the same CD.



(top) Lovely rendered cut scene (below) lovely in-game screen. Spot the difference?





STARFLEET ACADEMY

“Klingon Bird of Prey decloaking ahead Captain!”
“Shields up, open a hailing frequency.”
“Captain, the Klingons aren’t responding, scanners indicate a sudden power build up in their weapon systems.”

Would you open fire, or stall for time hoping to get the opportunity to engage the Warp Drive? Starship combat coupled with life and death decisions, this is Star Trek at its best. While previous Trek games have been well and good, there really hasn’t been a “Sim”



It's the masterful costumes and set design that sets Trek apart from the rest

approach to piloting and commanding a Federation Starship. Now with Starfleet Academy, we can all look fiercely at our monitors (viewscreen), clench our fist and yell “Fire!” in line with the finer moments of Will Shatner.

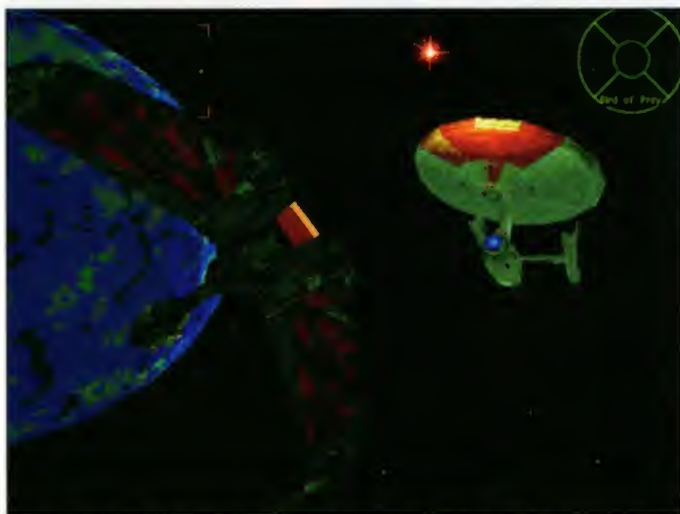
The ‘Wing Commander’ style
Starfleet Academy is set sometime in between Star Trek IV and Star Trek VI. These are the good old days of Trek when the Klingons were still the bad guys and the Romulans had silly looking ships. You are Cadet Forester, all round nice guy and newly enrolled at Starfleet Academy. To graduate you must work your way through a series of missions that involve combat, investigation and most importantly stressful decision making. Interplay have gone with a Wing Commander type format, so in between each mission you are treated to some high quality FMV that revolves around the trials and tribulations of Academy life.

Interplay’s biggest challenge in bringing a Starship Sim to the PC was the fine balancing act of staying true to the movie and TV series, whilst still making for a fun game. After all combat in the Trek universe is often two ships moving in towards each other and opening fire with the lot. Last one left with shields and life support is the winner. On the other hand, the Enterprise isn’t an X-Wing fighter, so cloning a Lucas Arts flight model isn’t going to cut it with Trek fans. Interplay have opted for very maneuverable Starships and things do feel very X-Wingy.



Initially Trek purists might feel cheapened as they push a Constellation class ship into a dive attempting to line up a Romulan cruiser in their sites, but there’s more to Starship combat than that. First off Phasers lock on target, so

Another Klingon death. Maybe they need their own Academy



It's moments like these the Federation needs a cloaking device

the joystick waggling element is not overly intrusive. Most of the time it's only necessary to get a good view of your enemy rather than getting them perfectly in your sights (easier said than done). Secondly, power management and systems operation play a very Trek like crucial role. As captain you must allocate power reserves to all of the major ship functions. Sensors, shields, engines and weapons... if it was in the series you will see it here. In one mission I was hunting pirate vessels in a Nebulae Cloud, a lovely place where scanners and visibility become forgotten luxuries. After quite a few battles my ship

was looking worse for wear, and repair crews were just keeping up with damage levels. I had all my power diverted to weapons and scanners (to improve visibility) and then stumbled onto an enemy base. A couple of Torpedo hits later and my Warp Engines were toast, so no cowards way out. A few more hits and shields were low, then the realization that there was minimal power going into the Impulse engines, leaving me completely stranded. Correct power management and forward planning usually saves the day in such situations, rather than a quick trigger finger. This is to the game's credit.

Death to the Federation!

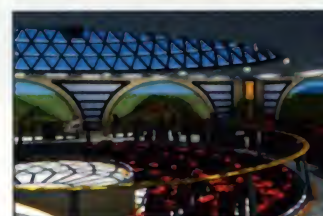
Trek fans that are knowledgeable of classic episodes such as "The Balance of Terror" are going to have an informed head start in more than one of the scenarios. Most of the 24 missions are tough and quite often

require detective work. One scenario involving the saving of endangered musical space organisms (classic Trek weirdness) still has me stumped. If straight combat is more to your liking, a mission editor is on hand. Any of the multiple ships on offer from the Klingon, Romulan or Federation fleets can be put up against one another - up to eight in one skirmish. In command of a Bird of Prey with three other Klingon ships under my command, we encountered some wimpy Federation cargo vessels. With a shout of "Kizzkuchky Refgh!" (Die Scum), they were easy pickings; now that was fun.

The graphics move along well, with nice effects such as shields lighting up when hit, and even appropriate ship parts breaking away when destroyed. The best effect is saved for the shimmering of cloaking ships, coupled with that unique "Frssshh" sound. As Academy aims to be a sim, different handling and weapon characteristics exist in all of the ships. Hop in a Bird of Prey and it handles like a fighter craft, compare this to the lumbering heavy cruiser and you can feel a definite difference. Problems with this game? The Klingon ships are weaker than expected, probably due to their demise as a Galactic power around this time period. Shield strength is also a bit suspect at times. Occasionally the first shot of an enemy penetrated the shields and damaged life support, bit annoying really. As long as you can leave at the door any ideas about seeing combat exactly



Starship cockpit, courtesy of Boeing



The sets are far from the pink cardboard walls of the old TV series

as it was done on the TV show, Trekkers and Space combat lovers are in for a real treat with Starfleet Academy.

Peter Sharpe

92%

Category	Starship Sim
Players	1-8 Network & Modem
Publisher	Interplay
Price	\$89.95
Rating	TBA
Available	Now

For Cloaked ships, Shields up, this is Trek. Excellent balance of ship management and combat.

Against Shields seem underpowered. Not enough technical data on ships included with the online Trekpedia.

Need P75, 16Mb RAM, 2xCD ROM.

Want P166, 32Mb RAM.





AGE OF EMPIRES

This is it, this is the big one. Finally, C&C's crown as King of the real time strategy genre will fall, after a uninterrupted reign of around 2 years.

Age Of Empires is a brilliant game, chock full of depth, excellently animated and varied units, impressive and adaptive AI, and enough missions and scenarios (as well as an editor) to keep you coming back for a very long time. Along with the PowerPlay 'Gold' award, it gets my highest personal award, the 'Red Eye' (symbolising the appearance of my eyes after playing it until dawn two mornings in a row - and so far I've only had it two days. I'm stocking up on Visine as of now).

The best of everything

The easiest way to explain AOE is to go with the comparison approach, which, as My Learned Colleague Mr Wildgoose has pointed out, doesn't always work. But I'm a lazy (and tired) bastard, so here goes. Imagine the layout, balance and complexity of C&C combined with the scope, depth and grandeur of Civilisation, add to this

the cuteness, resource structure and stylistic appearance of Warcraft2, and a picture should begin to emerge of just what Age Of Empires is about. What it all adds up to is one pretty fantastic game, a combination of the best three strategy games of the past five years, plus plenty more.... and as lackadaisical an explanation as that is, it's actually pretty close.

AOE comes from Ensemble Studios, which isn't one of the best known development companies in the world (as yet, anyway), but the name of one of their core development team, Bruce Shelley, should ring a few bells. He was a key member of MicroProse for around five years, and among other things worked on Civilisation with Sid Meier, which stands him in pretty good stead, and AOE does look quite a bit like Civ both in terms of the historical look and the overall design. It isn't just Civilisation in real time mode though, which

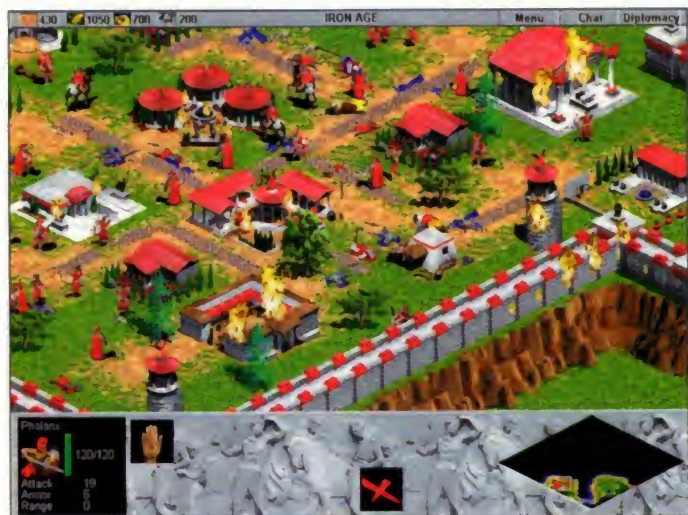
would be good enough for many people, including me - it's much much better.

For starters, you get the choice between twelve different civilisations to control, each with their own distinctive advantages and weaknesses, which are fairly historically accurate (the Egyptians have strong, well disciplined workers and are adept at farming, among other things for example). In fact, the Ensemble team have done some fairly serious study (for a computer game, that is) into the historical period that AOE covers,

though it isn't a historical simulation, rather a 'what might have happened' scenario. The game itself spans the period from 10,000 B.C. right up to the (alleged) birth of Christ, o A.D., and includes some of the lesser known tribes of the time, like the Choson's and the Minoan's as well as the more well known ones like the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians,



It's not all epic battlefield clashes, early exploration & resource mangement is critical



Babylonians and Assyrian empires. Essentially, though there are many different ways to play, most scenarios will start off with just a few hunter-gatherer units, a couple of huts and a town center. From here, you'll need to chop down trees, fock for edible berries in the trees, and then use these resources to sustain the population as it grows.

A busy kind of game

It all sounds nice and simple doesn't it? Well, it isn't, not at all - but in a good way. Once your peasants have built up a few resources, you'll have the opportunity to build more buildings and advance your empire technologically. For starters, you'll need a few more huts to house your growing population, and once that's done and the peasants are being pumped out, it's time to get things organised. Building storage huts as near as possible to resources is a good first step, closely followed by a training facility for some troopers. Then, things start to get a bit complicated, with more advanced buildings becoming available including docks for ship building, stables for scout horsies, temples for priests, government centres, markets, guard towers, archery ranges, and plenty



Naval units are perfect for shore bombardment



(top) Razing a city (below) Putting the finishing touches on the destruction of a village

others as well. Most of these can be upgraded, and as often as not be used for research into more advanced weapons and improvements. Becoming a little overawed yet? Just within the peasants range of abilities there's tasks like farming the land, chopping down trees, mining stone or gold, or even hunting animals for food such as elephants, lions and alligators, and pretty gazelles that leap gracefully away from their persecutors. Add to this the multitude of varieties of armed units and boats and it

should become obvious just how complicated and enthralling AOE can get. Then there's the 'ages' that you pass through. Beginning in the stone age, once your empire has accumulated enough resources you can move into the bronze age, with more

advanced structures and units available, and then once enough material has been accumulated the next step is to the iron age, where all the best units and structures will become available. So, gaining enough resources to jump ahead an 'age' from your competitors will provide a significant leap in technology and can often give you that much needed advantage on the battlefield, as well as in the economy stakes, as resource gathering skills can also be improved upon (once the necessary buildings are in place, and research is undertaken).

Multiplay magnificence

You should be getting a bit of a picture of just how complex and involving this game can get, and trust me, it's not one of those games that you can just jump straight into and play well. Take this for an example, being the intrepid games players (and slack workers) that we are, as soon as a couple of copies of AOE were obtained from Microsoft both Ben and myself snuck out of the office and ran straight home to load it up and have a modern play. After going through a few of the excellent training scenarios, I gave Ben a call to see what he thought. At that point, we were both a little disappointed 'too simple' we thought, 'just Warcraft with different graphics', but we decided to give multiplayer a go anyway. 4 hours later, the game still unfinished, we decided to call it a draw and go back for some more practice. It had all become too much for us, you see, we couldn't cope with all the upgrading, resource management, research, attack and defense required. And the really good thing is that it's not complex in a pointless, boring way. Instead, the blend of

Plus

www.microsoft.com/games/empires

BETA

Age of Empires is an epic real-time strategy game spanning 15,000 years in which players are the guiding spirit in the evolution of a nation from the Stone Age to the Iron Age.

Experience the excitement of the Iron Age in this new Beta version. The game is now available for free download from the Microsoft website.

Download the Beta version of Age of Empires from the Microsoft website.

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Download the Beta version of Age of Empires from the Microsoft website.

action and strategy is such that there's never a moment when you're not required to be doing something.

AOE is one of the very few games that keeps you on edge the whole time, requiring white knuckled concentration and reflexes in combination with well thought out planning and strategy, a mix you'll find in all the best games, like Quake and C&C (to name but two) - and I seriously think that AOE is right up there with these classic games.

Gareth Jones

93%

Category	Real time strategy
Players	1-8
Publisher	Microsoft/Ensemble
Price	\$89.00
Rating	TBA
Available	Now

For A fantastic blend of real time action with fairly hard core strategy. Great graphics, missions, multi-playable every which way (including team-play within the same civilisation), and enough depth to keep you coming back for a long time. And there's a scenario editor as well!

Against Ummmm...each civilisation is limited to 50 units, and this can be annoying at times, though it does make sense. And unit production can't be queued.

Need P90, 16Mb RAM, Win 95 or NT4, 2 x CD

Want P166+ (1024x768), 4 X CD



ENEMY NATIONS

The face of the real time strategy genre is changing, finally.

There's heaps of companies that have had the courage to try something new with the genre, and Windward Studios is one of them. The result, *Enemy Nations*, has almost worked, but not quite.

Essentially it's a cross between C&C and *Civilisation*, where you take the role of one of 12 races in a battle for control of the last hospitable planet in the galaxy. Your task is to build up a sustainable economy by mining coal, iron, wood, and oil which enables you to produce steel, power, planks of wood, and petrol for your trucks, and then go

blow up the enemy. With the steel and wood that you produce, you build buildings, including research centres with which you can research more advanced buildings, such as war factories and so on.

Full scale war

From there it's just a small step to full scale war, with a variety of units that...well...to be honest units that look a little familiar. Scouts, a couple of varieties of tanks, mortars, a few boats, and two types of infantry units is all that you get to choose from. There are a couple of nifty innovations though, like the ability to rotate your point of view from four angles, so buildings won't get in your way of seeing your units, and you can also set waypoints which is a nice, and necessary, touch. Also, in an effort towards some sort of realism, rather than just have resources become universal once processed, you have a fleet of trucks that operate by themselves (though you can take control if needs be) and move minerals and such around as needed. For example, to make steel you need iron and coal, so you set up a coal mine over coal and iron mine over an iron deposit. But once the minerals are mined, they need to be trucked in to the steel mill by your fleet, and from there the steel needs to be trucked to the units producing buildings to produce



The fun part - blowin' stuff up, could have been improved

units. It's a refreshing change for such a setup, and mostly it works too, the truck AI is competent and though you may occasionally need to take control of one for a special delivery, they will mostly operate by themselves quite adequately. Unfortunately, overall, despite a decent manual, a good tutorial mission and very pretty graphics (if you have a powerful enough PC, and I do mean powerful) *Enemy Nations* doesn't really take off. The enemy AI is, at best, weak - they tend to build around 8 defensive units and apart from the odd attack on your base that's more annoying than potentially destructive, just sit there and wait for you to come cream them - even on the hardest difficulty level. Then there's the unit types of which there aren't nearly enough. The saving grace, as per usual, is multiplayer,

which can accommodate up to 20 PC's networked (possibly more, depending upon the setup, though there are only eight player colours which might prove a little confusing), and looks like it might be great fun, as well as a server set up to match players for internet games.

Despite the good points, and there are a few, *Enemy Nations* doesn't quite work due to some gameplay inadequacies, and while it might prove interesting for a little while it's doubtful as to whether there's much lasting value.

Gareth Jones

Plus

<http://www.windward.net/enations/right.htm>
and there's a patch too, at
<http://www.windward.net/support/right.htm>



69%

Category	Real time strategy
Players	1-20
Publisher	Windward Studios
Price	\$59.95
Rating	TBA
Available	Now

For A commendable effort from Windward studios, the ideas behind the game are excellent, and provided you have the necessary hardware it looks great too.

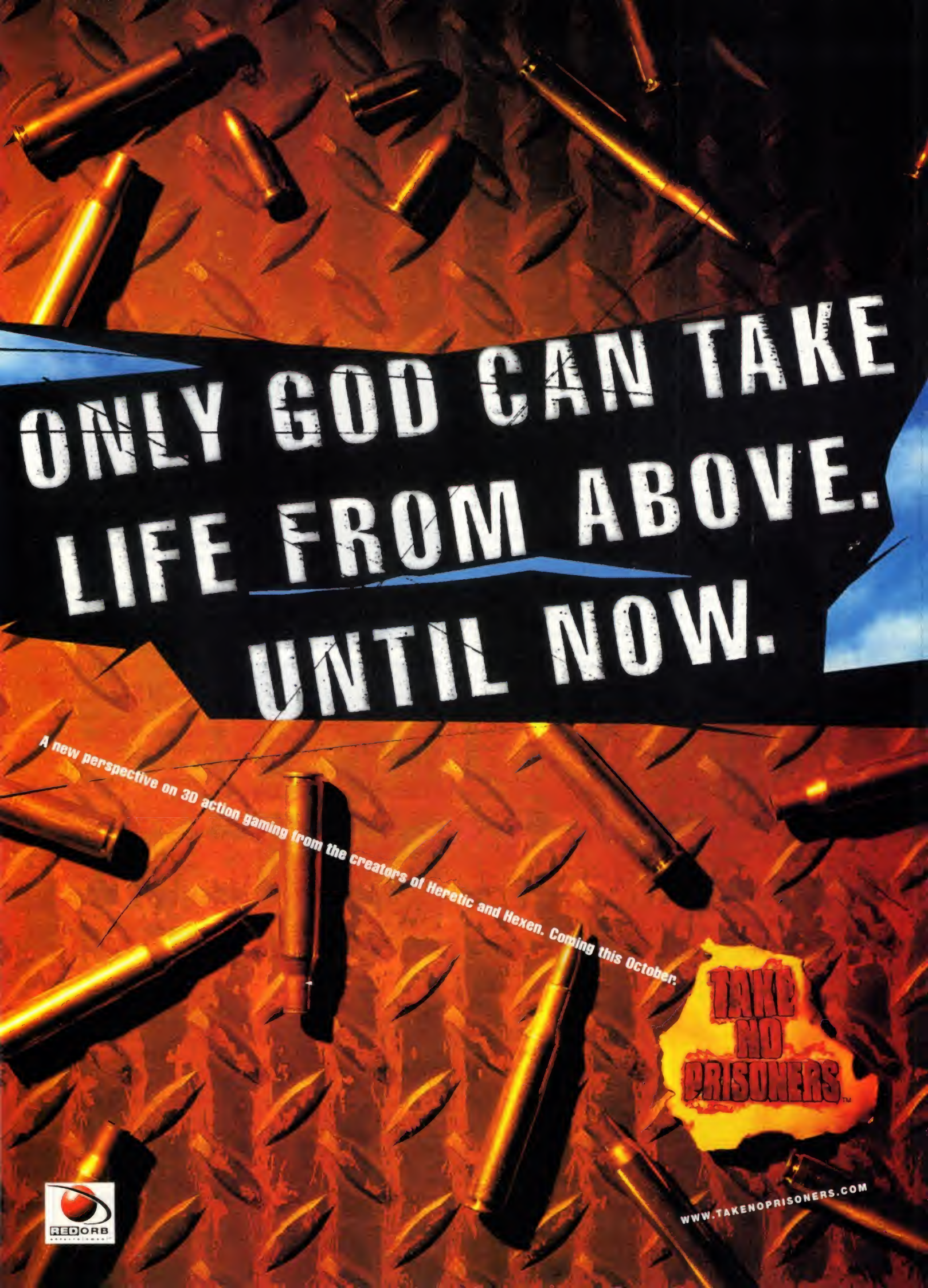
Against Despite their best intentions, the gameplay could have been much improved had the AI been fine-tuned and the mechanics of combat overhauled.

Need 486/66 8MB RAM, Win95/NT/3.x, 2MB PCI video card (note: this is what the box says. PowerPlay recommends a P133 with 32MB RAM as a base unit)

Want P200MMX, 64MB RAM, fast video card



The layout is very similar to Civ2, and works well, with a number of info windows open, configurable to your liking



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BIRTHRIGHT

It's a little bit strategy, it's a little bit D&D. It's different and we liked it just for that.

In a manifest effort to make a mockery of our "Category" section in the box below, Sierra's Birthright is a genre-hopping schizophrenic of a game. I like anything that tries something different, even if it doesn't quite succeed. Flawed genius is always better than a shruggingly sufficient mediocrity. Birthright's genius is to attempt to meld together bits of all your favourite resource management, empire building games with healthy doses of real-time and turn-based combat, plus a large dollop of first-person RPG adventuring.

Swiss Army Game

Not content with creating such a breadth of gameplay styles, Birthright also presents you with the option of specialising in one or two of these. The basic game eliminates much of the economic management of your realm, leaving you to organise your

army, perform diplomatic actions and declare war. The Advanced option increases your empire control, adding such considerations as building roads and holdings (guilds, temples and the like), forging trade routes and overseeing development. While Expert gives you total influence over every decision, granting the opportunity for espionage and much dabbling in the arcane arts.

Regardless of which of the above you select, you can also determine how involved you wish to become in the optional adventure and combat aspects. Adventuring entails hiring a group of "lieutenants" (from typical D&D classes such as Fighter, Thief, Priest and Wizard) and journeying into a fort or dungeon, defying any resistance met and making off with some useful magical artifact or treasure. Although these segments aren't overly remarkable (the 3D engine is shockingly antiquated), they do serve

nicely as a way of breaking things up to some extent. They would make for a pretty poor game in their own right, but they work as an enjoyable diversion. Events on the battlefield, however, fare a little better. If you choose to control combat (you do get the choice of letting combat be resolved automatically, by the way), you play out the battle on a quite nifty turn-based or

real-time (you can specify which, so a big thumbs up for that, too) tactical grid. The nuances of combat take some time to discover, but I think it succeeds impressively. And the rotatable camera view is a particularly good innovation.

Resource management!

Despite the surface appearance that realm management constitutes the majority of the game - it is, after all, what you'll be looking at for the most part - the strength of Birthright is that it truly does offer the flexibility for you to play as you wish. Other games try to do the same, letting you emphasise certain aspects, but Birthright is one of the few that gets it right. Diplomatic



It's got everything; resource management, realtime & turn based combat and elements of RPG gaming. Wow!

influence on those involved) or, in the case of allies, offering tributes or holdings, but the result still hinges on the roll of a die. Of course, it's perfectly reasonable that not everything you want to do or order to be done is actually achieved, but in practice it can get hugely annoying when things don't go as planned.

All up, though, this is a very interesting strategy title. Commendable in scope and ambition, but somewhat disappointing in execution.

David Wildgoose



It's great to see a game that pushes the limits rather than just copying. Pity it didn't quite work

Plus

Plenty of Birthright-related happenings at Sierra (quite literally) On-Line www.sierra.com



79%

Category Strategy
Players 1-8
Publisher Sierra
Price \$TBA
Rating M15
Available Now

For Good mix of styles. Something for everyone.

Against Still a bit too D&Dish.

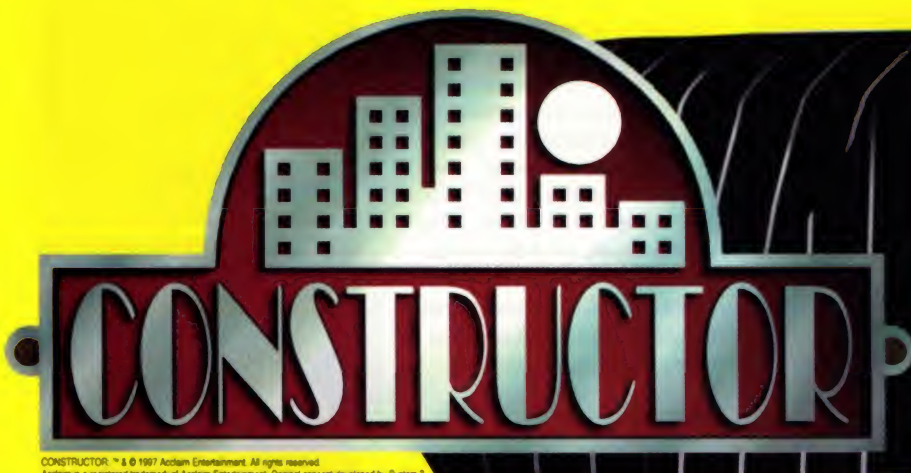
Need P75, 8Mb RAM, 4xCD

Want P100, 32MbRAM, 300Mb HDD, 6xCD

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CRICKET '97 ASHES TOUR EDITION

As we streak toward another long hot summer of Cricket It's soothing to know that Beam Software are right along side, waiting to take up the slack should any play be missed due to bad weather or Mark Taylor's batting lessons.



Earlier in the year Beam and EA released Cricket '97 which was a big improvement over their first Cricket title and much sought after by Cricket lovers throughout the world (except in America where they thought it was a game about chirping six legged insects, no joke!). Now, in response to the flood of requests and feedback they received from that release and to prove what top blokes and sheilas they all are, Beam have concocted Cricket '97 The Ashes Edition as the penultimate version of their signature game.

Before you cry "cheap shoddy cash in" I would like to say that this is more than simply a cheap, shoddy cash in on the fervour and butt clenching excitement of the Ashes tour but a serious and substantial reworking of the earlier game, seriously. I wasn't vastly impressed with the original '97, except for Richie's commentary. It was certainly better than Cricket '96 but



Australian fielders show their contempt for the English batsmen by line dancing in the outfield

still didn't really give you the feel of being involved in a Cricket match. Whenever I played almost all my runs came from hitting fours, no matter who I batted with, sixes were impossible and singles and two's were simply accidents! The field was also too small which gave the impression you were in someone's backyard rather than at the GABBA or MCG and players statistics seemed to have no relevance to their performance on field.

Vastly improved

Well wet my whites if Beam didn't take the criticism to heart, go away and cry for a little bit, and then



Yes! Real players, except for the English, of course



(top) "Looks like he put his third leg in the way of that one Richie, and he's out!" (below) Stump cam

bounce back with a vastly improved version of C'97 that puts their earlier effort to shame. The Ashes Edition has a whole host of improvements to the game engine that almost qualify it for a Cricket '98 tag.

For a start you'll get the REAL Australian and English teams with photos and stats for each player thanks to a new licensing agreement with the ACB and ECB, not only that but the stats now actually mean something. Beam have tweaked the game engine for each player so that good batsmen are now more likely to make the shot they are trying to and good bowlers are more likely to get an LBW or caught behind. The stamina and acceleration stats have now been changed to focus and aggression with focus being the ability to concentrate for long periods and to get their 'eye in' quickly and aggression determining how well a batsman hits the big hits. Another obvious enhancement is the increase in size of the stadium, fielders no longer look like they can join hands around the whole ground!

Sensible cricket

Further enhancing the experience are two new camera angles, a top down view and a roving camera both of which can be adjusted to suite your tastes and Beam have also thrown in an action replay mode, savable to disk, to relive those moments of glory. If you liked to bat in stump cam mode that view is now easier to play as



the game will auto switch to an overhead view after the ball is hit making it easier to see what's going on. Stumpings are now a one action movement rather than two, if you throw the ball to a particular end and the batsmen is still on his way there the keeper/bowler/fielders will automatically go for the stumps instead of waiting for you to tell him. There are also improvements to the scoreboard, multiplayer networking, mouse and keyboard control and the behaviour of the fielders with regards to diving and catching has also been enhanced. Phew, and there are even more improvements but you'll just have to play the game to find out what they are!

The game of the game

Cricket '97 Ashes Tour Edition takes Beam's sprite engine to its' ultimate conclusion and will be its' last outing, as C'98 will be a true 3D game. Really, this is the game that Cricket '97 should have been in the first place and all credit to Beam for sticking with it until they got it right. My only gripe would be that current owners of C'97 are being asked to fork out another \$80 for what they would have liked to have gotten in the first place. Maybe a discount offer, or even a

+ Plus

http://www.acb.com.au/html/disp_Engtours.html

free upgrade patch would be in order, though Beam probably had to pay a lot for the official licensing and would understandably like to get that money back!

George Soropos

87%

Category	Sports Sim
Players	1-2
Publisher	EA Sports
Price	TBA
Rating	Available
Available	Now

For	Host of new and improved features, real players and teams!
Against	Still hard to purposely hit singles, two's and threes, forking out \$80 for a game you already have
Need	P90, 16Mb RAM, 2xCD, Win 95
Want	P133, 4xCD, 32Mb RAM



THE GREAT BATTLES OF ALEXANDER

Forget the tired old post apocalyptic sci-fi strategy clones, this game is what it's all about.

Interactive Magic have really hit on something here. While not exactly high on the innovative scale (it's been done before), this game has an irresistible charm that had me coming back for more. It's not just the gameplay, it's not just the graphics (because quite frankly it doesn't look too spectacular). It's the feeling you get when you are part of something that was history. In this case, Alexander the Great's part in history. Claiming the utmost in realism (and surprisingly, although all this happened in the year's BC, it actually has a somewhat realistic feel), the Great Battles of Alexander attempts at recreating just that - Alexander's great battles. And there's something special about playing a strategy game where you're dealing with actual events and moments in great history. I'm not trashing the ultra cool storylines that are tacked onto games (I love my C C and Warcraft), it's just that there's a time in your gaming life when you can appreciate (even crave) something a little less verbose. Something that drops the fictitious facade, and gets down to pure and beautiful strategy.



Great! World domination map. Great!

REAL strategy

Funnily enough, another bonus while playing this particular strategy game is that you return to the roots of all known human (real) strategy. This is strategy in its purest form. Back in the times when the ultimate indication of your manhood was the size of your strategy. And if you know your history, Alexander was very well endowed. Of course, you can't exactly recreate Alexander's triumphs slaying by slaying, but you can do a very nice take on them and try to capture some of the essence of his battles. How is this done? In the campaign section of the game, each of the units have attributes based on historical significance. For example, a unit under the command of Spitamenes won't perform as well as a unit under Spithridates, because Spithridates



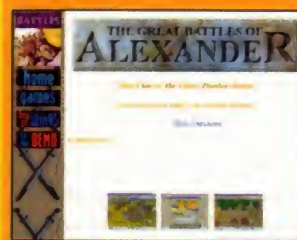
Great! Running commentry. Great!



Great! Little dead guys. Great!

Plus

<http://www.imagicgames.com/alexander.dir/alexander.html>



has much more charisma. Alexander even has a special Elite Initiative that instills more of a fighting spirit in his units than anyone else (he was renowned for his rallying abilities), and gives you the opportunity to strike first three times. On the downside, the number of units is slightly limited. Back then you had sticks, swords and other long pointy implements to poke your enemies with. Basically, you have Phalanx and other foot soldiers (five types), the Lancer, the Elephant, the Heavy and Light Cavalry and the almighty Chariot. Not something many gamers are generally used to.

Coping with reality

That's one area of Great Battles that will disappoint many. This is a turn based, hex-based strategy game that won't allow you to produce units on the fly in nearby towns or factories. You can't capture enemy bases. Instead, you meet on the field of battle and carefully direct your forces to victory. Very much like a game of chess, you think

about your pieces, where they can go, what you can afford to lose, and what you can't. Based on where your units are (and such intangible gameplay qualities as tactical bonuses) and what is around them, you'll either dominate, lose units, or flee in the process.

It's a dastardly in depth strategy game (just try to picture how deep it could have gone then), that will reward the purist strategist in you. Just don't be expecting any cheap and easy thrills - this will require some major investment.

March Stepanik

80%

Category	Strategy
Players	1-4
Publisher	Interactive Magic
Price	\$TBA
Rating	G8+
Available	Now

For Real, basic strategy with an authentic feel. Very rewarding if you can actually get your head around it.

Against No real time tutorials, can be dry, not exactly everyone's strategy game. Music was also inappropriate.

Need 486 DX 100, 16 MB RAM, Win 95

Want Pentium, 32 MB RAM





iF-22

Have you been hanging out for the release of all those flight sims we previewed after the trip to E3? Well look no further because here they come!

1 F22 offers three theatres of operation; Kuwait for training, then Bosnia and the Ukraine for combat operations. Over 250,000 square miles of photorealistic terrain has been digitised from satellite photos and elevation data to reproduce the battlefield in 3D. This does however impose a penalty by requiring 300 MB of HDD space for either theatre, and a whopping 500MB Permanent Swap File for medium and high res play! 3Dfx support is built in, and really brings this game to life at high altitudes.

Never the same twice

Single missions are created using a dynamic mission generation system which never generates the same mission twice. Campaign mode reflects the ebb and flow of the tide of war by varying successive missions depending on your accomplishments. As the flight leader of up to four F22s, you take the mission data and overlay it on the Situation Map that uses real

NATO symbology, then modify the flight plans and weapons load for each aircraft based on enemy and friendly intelligence data. Not much new there.

Communications with other friendlies is basic but workable. The most impressive feature is the ability to establish an In Flight Data Link (IFDL) with Forward Air Controllers (FAC) or aircraft such as AWACS. An IFDL with a FAC allows them to "lase" targets for you, or relay radar data if they have radar! An IFDL with AWACS lets you go passive by downloading radar data to your MFDs. Great stuff! You get 360 degrees radar view on the MFD and this lets you remain "stealthy" by not going active.

The weapons systems are fairly complex, just a tad below EF2000, and the flight model seems quite realistic. Thrust vectoring can get the aircraft sitting up at 70 degrees AOA while still flying forward - makes for great dog fighting agility.

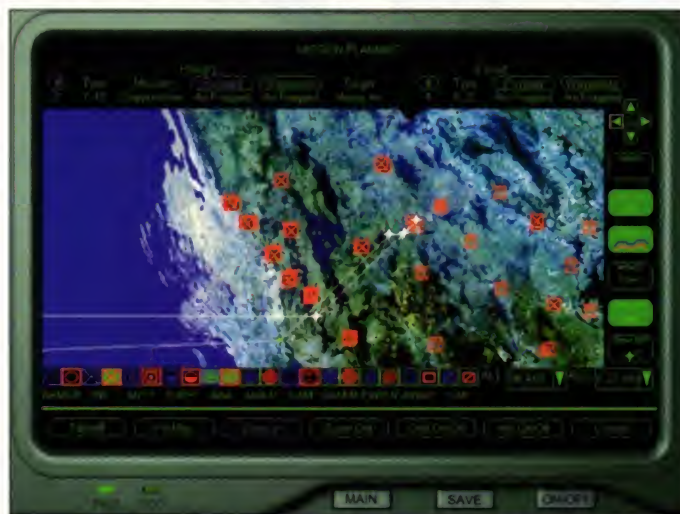
Bug out!

Sadly, there is a poor side to iF22. The game often throws you inverted due to a programming bug. What is more, try getting back into the cockpit after assuming another view; no matter how many times you press the F1 key, all you see is a forward view, no instruments or radar until you've almost rammed the F1 key through the keyboard! The HUD is particularly hard to read, and its colour options blend in with the environment to give you immediate eyestrain no matter which colour you choose.

Graphics are spectacular at greater than 10,000 ft, but assume NOE flying, and the ground reverts to splotchy muddy gunk. A few huts represent towns and cities, in fact all objects are very small, and at low level, targets such as bridges just sit there, no roads, no river, no



Bosnian terrain at the nexus between good & bad graphics



Mission map, where all the waypoint and payload planning takes place



The Ukraine terrain at 11000ft

nothing! All that beautiful 3D terrain disappears. Close in for a gun kill, and you can't see the enemy until he's 600 ft away; by that time you fly right on by and take one up the six! Explosive effects are not worth mentioning, but are always followed by the same billowing pillar of oily smoke, no matter whether the target was a tent or a nuclear power plant.

I think IM has jumped the gun a bit with this one and could have taken more time to develop what in many respects should have been a cutting edge simulation. In fact, the iF22 FAQ at IM's web site is a nightmare of fixits. Wait for the 1st patch before you buy this game if you really have to have it.

Maj. Ian Lindgren

Plus

The F22 is made by Lockheed-Martin. Checkout the Lockheed-Martin Aeronautical Systems' Web Site at www.lmasc.com for info on the real thing. Download some video footage and see how thrust vectoring capability will make the F22 an awesome adversary next century.



65%

Category Flight Sim
Players 1-8
Publisher Interactive Magic
Price \$79.95
Rating G
Available Now

For Great high level graphics and cutting edge initiative with IFDLs.







Against It's buggy. The ground level graphics are rotten, so too are the explosive effects. It's the most resource hungry game I have ever played.







Need Win95, P90 with 16 MB RAM

Want P200, 3Dfx Card, 32 MB plus RAM and 500 MB Swap File.

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Since their debut combat sim *Tornado*, Digital Integration has forged an enviable reputation as premier Combat Flight Sim experts.

F-16

Fighting Falcon

F-16 is Digital Integration's (DI) newest foray into the world of flight simming and I'm pleased to say that it has the look and feel of its two predecessors *Apache Longbow* and *Hind*. I tested the game in Win95 OSR2 with the new FAT 32 file system, and it worked flawlessly.

All the standard quickstart, single and campaign options are available, so too is modem and network play. The latter permits up to 16 players in a Deathmatch or Capture the Flag scenario.

Operational missions are flown in Korea, Israel and Cyprus. The latter two are based on current UN peace keeping operations deteriorating into war, and are quite well done.

10 canned single missions and 20 campaign missions are available for each war zone; a total of 100 plus missions (including training). The campaign missions do have variations based on your level of success, and repeated failure will kick you back to the first mission!

Canned missions

Mission briefings/debriefings are simple, a little too arcade like for me, but they do get the message

across in the successful script and voice over method used in *Longbow* and *Hind*. Waypoint selection and weapons loadout are well engineered into the game, and help build up the anticipation before takeoff because you can delve into tasks at each waypoint,



(above) A strafing attack by rockets on M163 AAA
(main) Inverted on the bombing run seconds before release!



Poor explosive effects at gooft

and pull in satellite photos and other live recon data; all useful planning stuff!

The DI landscape graphics engine is much improved, and while the results are definitely not cutting edge 3D stuff, most of us have the horsepower to play this game with all graphics options turned on; no 3D cards required! The sensation of speed is always there, particularly at low level where you approach and pass over your target within the space of a couple of seconds! The cockpit is the standard F-16 type, two MFDs, ground and air radar, computer identification of targets etc, no ground breaking stuff here.

DI perfected the Virtual Battlefield concept in *Apache* and *Hind* where troops can often be seen deploying, other aircraft in the air, convoys moving, land battles raging etc. They've used it again in *F-16*, and while it's very absorbing, it's just not quite up to DI's previous standard. For instance, the radio chatter is so garbled that you simply cannot tell what your wingman or other allied forces are saying to you on many occasions; this becomes very frustrating.

Explosive disappointment

The major disappointment I found was explosive effects. They are exactly the same as *Apache* and *Hind* where they were basic at best, a quick flash, it's gone, no smoke. This was OK in a helicopter sim because you could see the

explosion at 70 feet above the ground, but when moving at Mach 1 and 500 ft above the ground, the little pinprick flash you see is very deflating indeed. You don't even see AA missile explosions if you achieve a kill beyond 2 miles! DI really needs to address this ASAP because everyone likes to see the kill and the smoke of the battlefield; I rate this the most disappointing element of the game.

The number and variety of missions, the payload availability, and the virtual battlefield make this an absorbing sim; in my opinion, the best released since *E3*.

Plus

The Israel and Cyprus War Zones are based on real UN operations. Go to <http://www.fib.ethz.ch/fib/pko/intro.html> and click on Survey of UN Peace Keeping Operations. This will list all the current UN Peace Keeping operations. Click on United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and United Nations Peace-Keeping Force in Cyprus (UNPKFC). Dig deep enough into personnel contributions and you will see that Australian Service members and civilians assist widely. I have friends in both locations, and in the past have unfortunately lost one to a land mine, and one to gun shot wounds.



Nonetheless, improvements are required in explosive effects and message generation in order to get the most from this sim.

Maj. Ian Lindgren

80%

Category	Flight Sim
Players	1-16
Publisher	Digital Integration
Price	\$79.95
Rating	G
Available	Now

For A great variety of missions and the DI Virtual Battlefield.

Against Poor explosive effects and radio chatter.

Need DOS or Win95, Pentium 90 with 16 MB RAM

Want Pentium 166, 32 MB RAM

RESIDENT EVIL

Fear has a new face and it's on PC

Doge acid-spitting zombies, fight off mutant dogs

and free yourself from the psychotic aftermath

BLOODY good game

100 hours of gameplay, recommended 3D acceleration

Mega worldwide PlayStation hit



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CAPCOM

MA 15+



ATLANTIS

Another drop-dead gorgeous adventure game built with the revolutionary Omni-3D engine. Oh so pretty.

If there's one recurring feature of all French games, it's that they are, without exception, always extraordinarily beautiful. I know that's a gross generalisation, but in my experience it's one I have found to be true - LBA, Alone In The Dark, Another World, Cruise For A Corpse, you should know them by now. And I challenge any-

one to name a French game that, upon its release, wasn't at the cutting edge of visual technology. Atlantis is another one, natch.

Utilising Cryo's excellent Omni-3D graphics engine, as first seen in Versailles 1685, Atlantis is a breathtaking adventure set in the mythological city of the same name. In this matriarchal society, Queen Rhea, as representative of the goddess Ammu, is the ruler. Her grip on this reign, though, is becoming precarious. The Consort and his men, the palace guards, have been plotting against Queen Rhea and criticising her peaceful and backward-looking rule. Seth, the noble young man you play, is brought to the palace in Atlantis to take up the position of Queen's Companion.



the most impressive aspect of the game. That's not necessarily a bad thing, as you'll see. You can also see for yourself just how pretty Atlantis looks (and I mean really, really pretty), so instead I'll tell you how it moves. At any point in the game you can swing the mouse around - left or right through 360 degrees, as well as up and down to a lesser extent - to get a better view of your surroundings. These aren't all static back-

drops either; water fountains flow steadily, while people and animals move around. Combat sequences (which are fairly short and infrequent, and so won't intrude too much for all you adventure traditionalists) are fully integrated into these scenes, avoiding the jarring "pop-up" of many other similar titles.

Better still, while you are swinging that mouse around, an arrow will appear centre screen to indicate where you can move.

Click the button here

and you'll be ever-so-smoothly scrolled to the new location. During these movements the graphics actually appear crisper and, consequently, are a joy to behold. At times it feels like a sedate, but far more attractively detailed, version of Quake. Or something.

Smart puzzles

Sadly, the adventure side of things doesn't scale such dizzy heights. The gameplay is hugely linear. At all times, there is only one action you can take to progress further. If you're lucky, there'll be one or two other things to try, but these will just get you killed or imprisoned -



When games look this good, it's easier to forgive stiff gameplay

Your arrival, however, is untimely (or very fortunate I guess, depending on how you look at it) - the Queen has gone missing! And so it begins, with you trying to discover what happened to Rhea, while the Consort, the guards, and some treacherous Companions assume

a stranglehold on power.

Flash graphics

I suppose I should talk about the graphics first, because this is easily

Plus

You can find a complete walkthrough at www.cryo-interactive.fr



i.e. end of game. That's not to say Atlantis is too easy, it simply feels too much like you're being lead by the hand. Against that, there are a number of smartly designed puzzles, particularly when you have to sneak around the palace, listening to the footsteps of the guards to avoid being caught. But then, there are also a number of silly and contrived logic puzzles, which always diminish the atmosphere for me.

All up, Atlantis isn't the best adventure game I've played, but the myriad objects of visual wonderment constantly competing for your attention make it a very enjoyable experience.

Hear that thud? That's your jaw dropping, that is.

David Wildgoose

73%

Category	Adventure
Players	1
Publisher	Cryo
Price	\$89.95
Rating	G8+
Available	Now

For The graphics, obviously. Dynamic cut-scenes and close-ups. Lovely music and more than adequate speech. Atmosphere, atmosphere, atmosphere.

Against Too linear. Several tedious puzzles.

Need P90, 16Mb RAM, 4xCD

Want P133, 8xCD, 4Mb video RAM

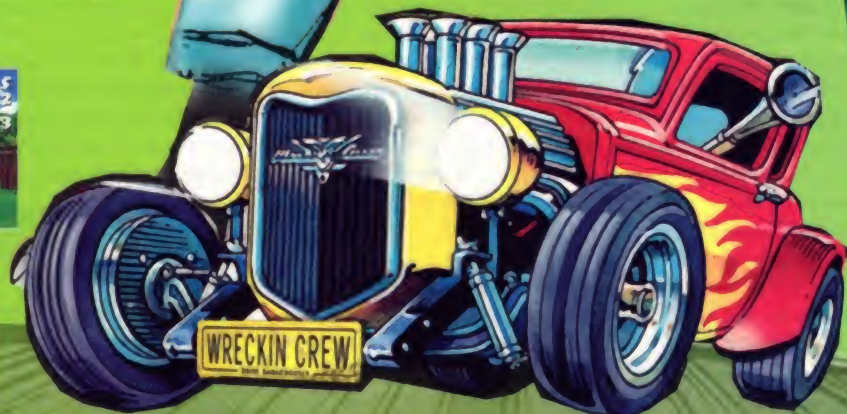
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TELSTAR



MASS DESTRUCTION

An unashamed console port with lashings of pointless (but very fun) blowing things up, Mass Destruction makes the jump to the PC very easily, and well

water towers, enemy tanks, gun encampments, soldiers and generally anything else that gets in your path. There is a rather mediocre (and fairly unnecessary) briefing section at the start of each mission, explaining just why it is you're blowing these things up, for those who are interested in that kind of thing. Generally the plot line runs something like; you need to establish a base in enemy territory by blowing up the enemy's base and then taking it over. Once that's been completed you need to make a raid on the enemy base and blow them up,



Napalm. Perfect for those pesky infantry units

The simple things in life...

There's something refreshingly interesting about Mass Destruction. It doesn't pretend to be anything it's not, and right from the start just screams at you 'I am an unabashed console port, filled with arcade style no-thought-involved-blowing-up-things-as-often-as-possible-fun!'. And that's all it is, really. Sure, being a console port, you're not really expecting all that much in terms of depth or seriousness, but Mass Destruction revels in its simplicity. Your task is to take control of a tank and run around blowing things up, including

and then you need to visit the enemy and blow them up, and then you need to visit the enemy and blow them up...you get the idea. This isn't necessarily a criticism, Mass Destruction is the kind of game where the less thought involved the better, as far as I'm concerned

Hand/eye/hand coordination

So the deal is you're in the tank of your choosing, either a fast lightly armoured one, a medium armoured medium speed model, or heavy and slow behemoth. You're cruising around the map and shooting at stuff, picking up powerups



It's often easier to blow things up rather than go around them

like armour replenishers, napalm, guided missiles, high explosive shells and so on, and just having a pretty damn fun time. The main problem with the PC version is the control method, which will take a bit of getting used to. Ever tried doing that 'pat your head and rub your tummy at the same time' trick? Well, anyone who's proficient at that will probably take to the control method of Mass Destruction like a fish to water. People, like me, who no matter how hard they try can't pat and rub at the same time will take to it more like a cat to water, which is to say not very well at all. The problem is that, as with real tanks, the turret rotates through a 360 degree arc independent of which direction the tank is moving at the time. Now, the reason this works on real tanks is because there's one person to steer it, and another to move the turret. In Mass Destruction sitting still while you fire tends to make the tank a rather easy target, so moving whilst firing is a necessary combat manoeuvre. This means rotating the turret to keep the enemy in line while moving around them, which will take a bit of getting used to for most if not all people (tummy rubbers and head patterers notwithstanding). While it might sound a bit daunting, it's actually quite fun to get the hang of, and doesn't present a long term problem to the enjoyment of the game, especially



Mindless, senseless mass destruction. Big fun!

considering that multiplay capabilities are included, and here's where Mass Destruction (as per usual) really begins to show its potential. Running around and blowing the hell out of some AI buildings and units is a good deal of fun, but perfecting a manoeuvre where you drive in circles around another player while keeping him under a constant barrage from your rotating turret is much much better. Overall, It's not going to top the charts or change the way we look at games, but for what it is, Mass Destruction is good clean fun.

Gareth Jones

78%

Category Arcade tank sim
Players 1
Publisher NMS Software
Price \$89.95
Rating TBA
Available Now

For It's a simple but effective game, the graphics are decent without being spectacular, and there's bucketloads of arcade style action fun to be had.

Against Long term value is questionable, and sometimes your top down view can become obscured by buildings in the way (until you blow them up, anyway)

Need 486/66, 8mb RAM

Want P90, 16mb RAM

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TERRACIDE

"Holy flying can openers Batman it's a Descent clone!"

"To the leather harness room Robin, there isn't a moment to lose..."



Sweet lord, help us! It's the attack of the remote control aircraft!

You too may be as surprised as the dynamic duo were to learn that someone has taken the plunge into Descent territory, something that even Descent didn't do too well, but lo, Eidos have bitten the bullet and launched what could be one of the most annoying 3D shooters of all time.

The story so far...

"Centuries ago humans left the Earth behind to make a new life in

the stars. But the worlds they found were strange and unforgiving. The colonists had to change to survive using advanced technology to remake themselves into shapes more suited to their harsh new homes. Some landed on Disney World and were forced into sewing big ears on their heads and having their gonads removed while others endured the horrors of Canberra and turned to surgically applying used vacuum cleaner parts to their arms and legs to relieve the boredom. Eventually they decided that Earth wasn't so bad after all and started on their long journey home".

This is where you step in, as saviour of all mankind and lover of kittens. "Hell we don't want those

ungrateful freaks back here with their vacuum cleaner hoses hangin' off their backsides and their big fluffy mouse ears, kill 'em all I say!" And so with your orders given and your super duper space fighter of death all primed and ready for action you sail off into the inky blackness to meet the returning fleet.

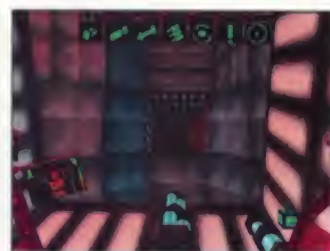
"Captain! She's out of control!"

Well this is all well and good I hear you say but what happens next? Well, you get to the fleet, infiltrate each ship and destroy them one by one. Only thing is you'll have such a hard time controlling your vessel you'll probably give up and go home! Those of you who had trouble getting a handle on controlling Descent should steer well clear of this title, Terracide takes the word unmanageable to new heights. The essential problem is that, using every control method I could think of, I never felt comfortable playing this game. The auto leveling and auto pitch functions are so unforgiving that it's impossible to actually aim at anything! As soon as you try the auto correction kicks in and pulls you off target. Without auto leveling and pitch? Forget it, unless you want to spend hours spinning 'round in circles and bumping into the ceiling.

The enemy robots aren't as smart or fun to destroy as those in Descent and the level maps are descending. Endless long corridors with the occasional small room, plus an almost uncontrollable ship, make for a very average gaming experience. Sure the graphics are purty but, as we all know, that doesn't make up for anything. There isn't even a level editor to let you create some fun maps of your own, just corridors, corridors and more corridors.

Multiplay?

You want multiplay? Forget it. Imagine playing Quake with eight people in one long corridor, without the ability to aim at anything and with your point of view constantly wobbling around like you were blind drunk and you'll have some



Yes, there is light-sourcing at the end of the tunnel

idea of what it's like. Frustrating, infuriating and annoying aren't the sort of words any company would like to hear as describing their product but it's what Eidos' playtesters should have told their employers about this game! Terracide is a failure, if you want pulse pounding, robot mashing 3D fun Descent is still the only one.

George Soropos

65%

Category	3D shooter
Players	1-8
Publisher	Eidos
Price	\$TBA
Rating	G
Available	Now

For Pretty graphics, nothing else.

Against Horrible ship dynamics, claustrophobic and boring maps, lack of originality and lack of thought.

Need P50, Wings, 16Mb Ram

Want P90, 3D accelerator



***THE WHOLE WORLD
HAS BEEN WAITING
FOR JEDI KNIGHT:
DARK FORCES™ II...***



EXTREME ASSAULT

No mucking around, this is straight action dressed in a very attractive package. Cool.

Aliens hellbent on global domination are at it again. This time they're planning on converting the Earth's atmosphere for their own evil purposes. You are the last hope of saving the world from the Alien invasion. Sounds all too familiar? Well, it's



Plus

www.bluebyte.com has a playable demo as well as hints and tips for the game.



Tanks are there too, plus giant chicken foetuses. Cool

the plot for Extreme Assault, the latest offering from the Blue Byte Software stable.

As cliché as the plot may sound it's not all that bad. You have a considerable arsenal, including a chopper and a tank readily at your disposal. The fate of mankind lies in your hands, so it's your job to guide your assault vehicles through several landscapes and several levels in an effort to find the aliens' hideaway and give them a hiding. As you progress through the game, which takes on a Descent-like flavour, you are required to pilot your vehicles inside buildings and through tunnels to take out targets.

Oh no! Aliens!

Once you're in Extreme Assault you choose a pilot and each different pilot has a different ranking. The higher the ranking, the harder the gameplay. Throughout most of the game you have a specific objective, ranging from rescuing survivors of a crash, destroying alien convoys, sinking stolen battleships, or simply protecting your ground. Fast reflexes and an itchy trigger finger are the basic tools you need to purge the alien scum throughout the forty-something levels.

Extreme Assault may look and feel like a flight sim at first the game supports full-blown controller setups with throttles and rudder pedals—but its flight models and weapons systems are designed for action, not realism. Just like the name implies, Extreme Assault is a no-holds-barred, lock-and-load, blow-up-everything-in-sight shooter that takes action gaming to a new level.

The emphasis is on pure action, no need to bother with tedious control mechanisms, all that is simplified so you can concentrate on more important issues, like causing total alien carnage. The controls are a snap, and if you

don't like them you can change them in the options menu. If you've tamed Descent you should have no trouble adjusting to the controls or the steering and manoeuvring.

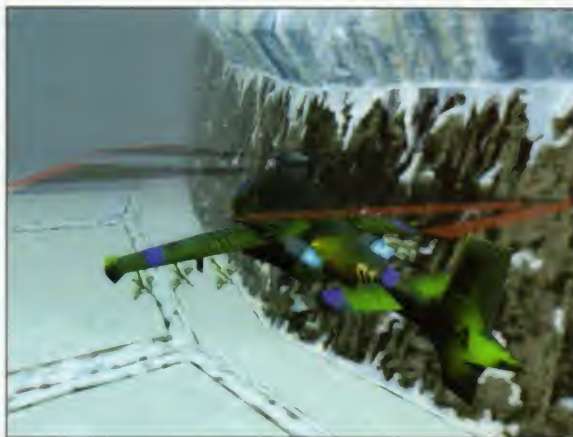
65,000 colours!

The game offers a pretty simplistic setup option. First it checks your PC to see what video modes are supported and then it chooses the most decent one. On an average machine, you can expect it to be 640x480x256, but that's not to say the game will run like a slide show. On the contrary, you can expect smooth 20 fps even on a stock 2D graphics card. The game also supports state-of-the-art hardware such as 3Dfx graphics cards, MMX processors, and force-feedback joysticks.

Extreme Assault is a very pretty game. With 65,000-color graphics (compared with the 256 colours used by typical action games), amazingly fast screen updates, and special effects such as transparent fog and explosions, Extreme Assault will give you a good idea of what to expect from games that support 3D hardware. The sound is equally impressive containing a full audio soundtrack and all the usual fx you expect from Blue Byte.

Another great feature is the multiplayer mode. Up to four people can duke it out at once, or you can pair up with a fellow ace to fly the specially designed levels. In the "fight to the death" mode each player flies/drives around in their selected vehicle on the lookout for other players to annihilate. Each player has headquarters in the four corners of the battlefield so if you have been hit or low on energy you can simply enter your designated zone to recharge.

Extreme Assault is one of those games that you play for an hour and then (due to the impossibility



The levels are relatively small, but are very well designed, and of course, 3Dfx pretty

of the current level you're on) turn it off. Later when you return, you complete the level in one go.

It seems that every time you go back to it, you're a better player and due to the hardness later levels you can expect to be playing it for months on end. Overall a very enjoyable and entertaining game that should appeal to all action gamers.

Harry Maragos

88%

Category	Action
Players	1-4
Publisher	Blue Byte
Price	\$89.95
Rating	G8+
Available	Now
For	Stunning realtime 3D graphics that doesn't require and expensive 3D accelerator cards and excellent multiplayer.
Against	MIDI becomes repetitive after a while.
Need	486DX4/100, 16Mb RAM, DOS/Win 95, 2xCD
Want	Pentium 100, 16Mb RAM, 3dfx

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Aaron vs. Ruth: BATTLE OF THE BIG BATS

CATEGORY	Sports
PLAYERS	1-2 (same computer)
PUBLISHER	Mindscape
PRICE	\$TBA
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P90, 16mb RAM, WIN95.
WANT	P133, 32mb RAM.

overall

60%

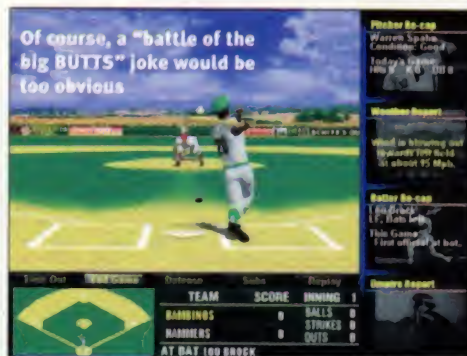
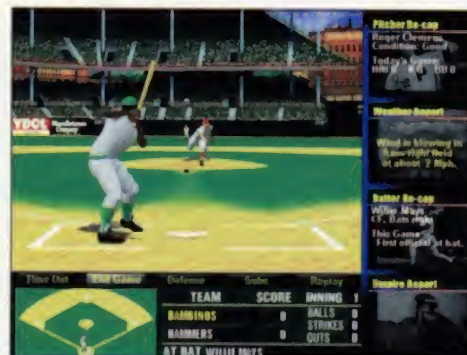
Too laid back, and a lack of Modem/Network support keep this in the average stakes.

Apparently there was a golden age of Baseball, a time when players didn't go on strike because their paychecks slipped under the one million dollar mark. The coaches didn't even run on to the field abusing the Umpire, threatening him with globs of used Chewing Tobacco and a vicious looking Baseball mit. Mindscape have attempted to bring this Golden era of Baseball to the PC complete with Hank Aaron (apparently a legend, but it's news to me) and the all American Icon Babe Ruth. Along for the ride are an assortment of classic players from years gone by to a few modern ones as well.

While you can jump straight into a single game, the option of a full season (including the trading of players, and loads of stats) is available for those serious minded ball hitters. Once onto the field, you can allocate any aspect of the game such as base running and fielding to computer control. This is welcomed, as without a fancy gamepad it's tough to field using the keyboard. The main areas of action are pitching and batting, and there are

some problems. Pitching is just plain dull. Pick from your choice of Fastball, Curveball and the like then aim with a crosshair and fire away. Some sort of arcadish joystick waggle is needed to make it more interesting. Thankfully the batting is better handled. It relies upon matching your hitting angle with the Pitcher's aim marker that appears briefly before his throw. Fast reactions are required, but it feels great when you hit the sweetspot and grab the Homerun.

With most Baseball Sims concentrating on the modern game, Mindscape could have found a niche for fans of Ye olden days Baseball. While Aaron vs. Ruth is competent, the whole presentation looks flat by today's standards and then there's the fact that only the bat-



ting is really entertaining. Extreme Baseball fans might want a look in, just so they can hit a Homerun with the Babe, otherwise pass on this one.

Peter Sharpe

Dragon Dice

CATEGORY	Fantasy/roll based strategy
PLAYERS	1-4
PUBLISHER	Interplay/TSR
PRICE	\$TBA
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	486 DX/66, 8MB RAM 40 MB HD space, 2xCD-ROM
WANT	Nothing special.

overall

71%

Enjoyment of this game is probably best gauged by how much you choose to role play, and how good your imagination is.

The first thing you have to ask yourself before you even think about taking this one home is whether or not the whole AD&D phenomenon and table-top battle gaming really appeals to you. Dragon Dice is based completely on a dice rolling game. Straight out. And as with all AD&D products, Dragon Dice is a game laced heavily with fantasy (almost factual in its delivery) and is unnervingly complex.

As the box description so beautifully puts it, "DRAGON DICE tells the story of an epic struggle between Nature and Death where you assemble powerful dice armies, build vast empires and devise strategic planning for world domination. Hordes of Selumari, Vagha, Morehl, and Troggs sweep across the land in endless battle, employing elemental magic to wreak havoc on each other and summoning Dragons in hopes of winning a final and lasting victory." In reality (which can sometimes be a difficult concept to grasp coming out of one of these "battles"), take out the world domination bit (well, it's not exactly

Earth), cut down the vast empires section, and increase the total dosage of hardcore fantasy strategy.

Initially, Dragon Dice is a very complicated game. The original is rather rule intensive, and without the help of your condescending best buddy to help explain why the Orcs simply won't share a decent meal with Dwarves because of the race issue, you'll have to turn on to the rather friendly (yet damned serious!) virtual tutor. Always wondered why Og the Grunt couldn't cast the spell of Eternal Mystification? You will now know why! But the actual gameplay is interesting. A computer strategy game that reverts to the highly random outcomes that could only be provided by a dice with a limited number of sides, is an intriguing prospect. Functional graphics, grunts and yells, and plenty of interesting graphical quirks.

Rather than bring us a new experience based on the dice game, Dragon Dice aims to recreate the entire table top phenomenon to the last detail. This is its ultimate fault.



Fact: Orcs, Dwarves & Elves don't go out, play sport or work. They just fight

A passion for fantasy gaming and role-playing is a must, otherwise you'll find Dragon Dice (complete with virtual die rolling) a total turn off. You will find a decent strategy game under the license, but with all manner of strategy games on the shelves, shop around.

March Stepnik



THE YIN OF DEATH
THE YANG OF LIFE
ALL IN THE HANDS OF
ONE SICK NINJA PUPPY

LO WANG IS
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The Ardennes Offensive

CATEGORY	WW2 tactical
PLAYERS	1-2(modem, e-mail, network...the lot)
PUBLISHER	SSG
PRICE	STBA
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P90, 8Mb RAM, WIN95.
WANT	P90, 16Mb RAM

overall

86%

Challenging, highly involving and a well crafted piece of WW2 battle history.

You might recognize SSG from their previous efforts, in particular Warlords 2 & 3 and Reach for the Stars. Both are classic games of strategy and it's a nice heart warming feeling to know that these guys are an Aussie outfit. Ardennes Offensive is the latest offering from these masters of warmongering, and the setting is the latter years of WW2. Specifically the Battle of the Bulge, where in 1944 the German war machine went on one last big offensive in Western Europe to stem the tide of Allied advances.

As with most dry strategy titles there isn't much gloss and glamour. The meat is in the high level of tactics, and desktop Generals are not going to be disappointed. Eight scenarios representing the entire Ardennes campaign are present, allowing you command of either Allied or German forces. Each of these scenarios allocates victory points for enemy units destroyed, and most importantly cities taken. All of this takes place in the usual Hex based movement system that will keep veterans feeling warm and cosy. The biggest change in format,

is combining combat and movement into one turn phase. This means that each unit can move, engage the enemy and continue on moving rather than the established system of having all units resolve combat at the end of turn. It's a definite plus, as it allows for more realistic and dynamic movement/combat combinations. Positioning of troops with the aim of surrounding enemy units with fire, and keeping supply lines open are the imperative strategies in Ardennes. Sounds simple enough but it's difficult, especially when you're the Germans and re-enforcement's are often hard to come by.

Hardened tacticians will no doubt leap into Ardennes with much gusto. It's historically accurate (the Germans do it tough) and really pushes you in finding appropriate strategies to cope with various environment and resource problems. Battle newbies will find things tough going initially, mainly because of the large amount of detail which isn't helped by a poorly documented tutorial. I recommend jumping in though, as this is a greatly satisfying wargame.

Peter Sharpe



We will fight them on the desktops, in the windows and in the pop-up menus

Pacific General

CATEGORY	Strategy
PLAYERS	1-8
PUBLISHER	Mindscape
PRICE	STBA
RATING	G8+
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P90, 16Mb RAM, 4XCD
WANT	It's a hex game for gosh sakes

overall

82%

Completes the WWII theatre coverage of SSI's 5 star series in style, with enough new features to keep regulars amused for a long while.

Another instalment in SSI's seemingly endless 5 star series, Pacific General is a return to the original intent of the series after Star and Fantasy Generals took it a bit off centre.

Based around the Pacific theatre in WWII Pacific General puts you in command of either the Japanese or US forces in a huge number of scenarios or as a continuous campaign. So what's new apart from the box?

The Pacific theatre was home to the most intense naval action of the war, 'bit like Sydney's Newtown is now, and so SSI have had to beef up the naval combat model and add support for aircraft carriers and subs. Of course ground based combat is still the meat and potatoes of the game but that hasn't changed

much, well at all, since Allied General. It's now possible to launch air attacks from your carriers and then land you aircraft for repairs before sending them off to battle. Unrealistic but it keeps the game flowing smoothly!

Different types of aircraft also have different attacks, torpedo bombers like the Dauntless can attack from adjacent hexes as well as from directly above. Submarines have the capability to submerge before they attack, makes sense I suppose, which makes it harder for the enemy to counter attack. But they are very vulnerable if caught on the surface.

SSI have revamped the interface slightly, making the unit icon menus much less obtrusive than in earlier 'General titles and adding pretty movies that run constantly in the info bar at the top of the screen. But probably the best thing about the



An abundance of seamen sets Pacific General apart from its counterparts

whole game is the new 'Battle Generator' which allows you to custom build your own scenarios using units from ALL of the WWII based General games, Panzer, Allied and Pacific!

If you're a fan of the 5 Star series, as SSI calls it, then you'll want Pacific General to complete the set, it has enough new stuff to warrant inclusion in you collection.

George Soropos



LinksLS

Kapalua

1998 Edition

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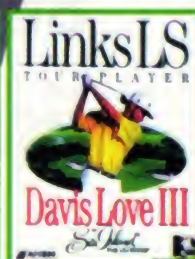
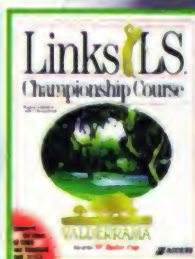
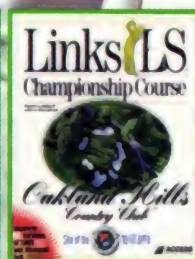
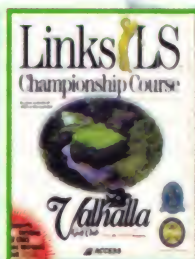
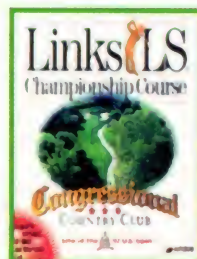
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Links LS98

PC PowerPlay
GOLD
90%+

CATEGORY	Golf Sim
PLAYERS	1-8
PUBLISHER	Access Software
PRICE	STBA
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P90, 16Mb RAM, WIN95.
WANT	P133, 32Mb RAM, upwards of 200Mb HDD Space.

overall

91%

The Mother of all Golf games.



Some people like the look of a smooth-textured polygon rocket hurtling toward them, others enjoy the tranquillity of gridded greens and strange fashions

For those skilled in the game, the ancient pastime of Golf is a pleasurable weekend pursuit. True horror lies in wait for the uninitiated though. Sunburn

resembling Fourth Degree Burns, embarrassment as "Golfing Regulars" smirk at your feeble skills, and that sinking feeling when realizing that Mini Golf tactics don't quite cut it on the Putting Greens. Along comes Links LS98 to the rescue with humiliation that

only extends as far as your monitor, and no need for sunscreen.

Oh how pretty Links is. The standard 800x600 65,000 colours looks magnificent, but if you have an evil graphics card with more than 2 Meg of RAM be prepared for art museum quality in the likes of 1024x768 in 16.8 million colours. For lovers of frilly bits, FMV course overviews and even an interview with Golfing legend Arnold Palmer confirm that Access love detail with their Golf.

The Links way of playing Golf is not revolutionary, just very well done. A gauge representing shot power and accuracy quickly lets

you know whether you hit the sweet spot or sliced the ball to all Hell. The Physics are all solid with no wobbles or strange bounces to speak of. For the Golf perfectionist, advanced shot setup though foot placement is available for that nice bit of tweaking. Difficulty comes with Putting, with the Greens featuring realistically sloped surfaces. I'll never laugh at Greg Norman choking on a Putt ever again.

Accompanying the Latrobe Country Club, and the three Kapalua Hawaiian courses are an army of options. Customize everything from your various camera angles, to the speed of the green and the level of fog... anybody with a fetish for options will be in Heaven. The biggest fault amongst all this Golfing pleasure is the omission of a dedicated Links Internet server. Hunting around Internet chat rooms and Kali will have you stumbling into opponents, but it's not as easy as PGA Tour Pro's inbuilt and ready to go Multi-player server. Aside from this, Links is near Nirvana for computer Golfers.

Peter Sharpe

PGA Tour Pro

CATEGORY	Golf Sim
PLAYERS	1-4
PUBLISHER	EA Sports
PRICE	STBA
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P90, 16Mb RAM, WIN95
WANT	P100, 24 Mb RAM.

overall

86%

PGA isn't stunning, but it has Fuzzy Zoeller and it does gets the job done.

While it's very predictable for EA Sports to release a new edition to their flagship Golf series, PGA Pro does have some nifty features. The most exciting being Internet play. Damn, there goes another chance not to mention a buzz word like "Internet" in a review.

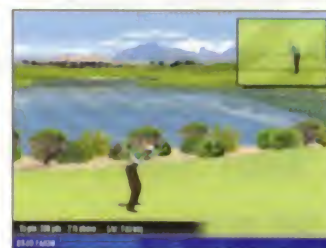
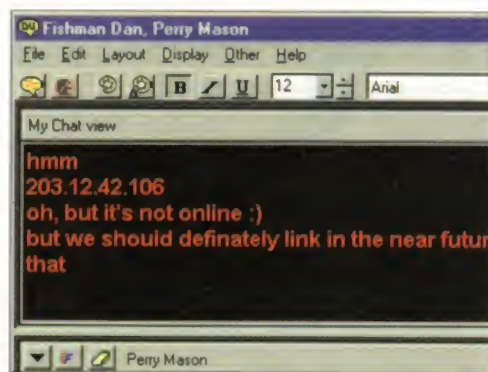
While the "I" word gets used in conjunction with many games, laggy play is often the result. Golf on the other hand does not need lightning speed data transmission between players so it's well suited to the medium. In light of this EA Sports have created "EA Sports Net", a server that is reached by a simple Mouse click. Here you can enter tournaments or just meet up with people and play a casual game. Works brilliantly, and even automatically updates you with the latest patches.

With Mouse in hand and ready to Tee off, how does PGA Pro rate? As with its forbears, gameplay is solid without any major deficiencies. Clicking on the course, or the overhead view shows a friendly graphical arc which demonstrates the intended flight of the ball.

Choose your club and then use the Swing Gauge in an attempt to get that Birdie. A Risk Meter has been added to the proceedings which shows in colour increments how foolhardy your shot might be. Handy for seeing whether that dubious shot

over the Lake is really worth it. Problems do arise with the Putting. Often a shot that should see the ball skimming by the hole sinks straight in, making Putting easier than it should be. The other downer concerns the graphics. While looking quite attractive on its own, compared to Links LS98 there does seem to be a lack of depth and visual detail in PGA Pro.

While PGA Pro does not slay all of the other Golf games on the market, it succeeds in satisfying the casual Golfer who wants a straight forward Golfing experience. Add the ease of Internet play into the equation and the inclusion of the

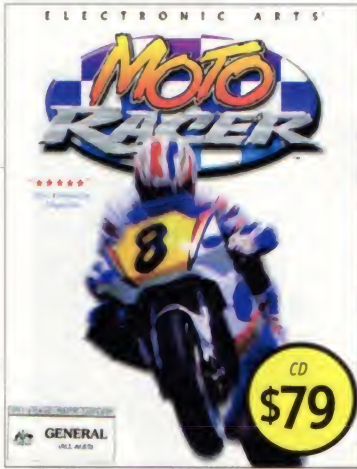


The greenkeepers in PGA Tour Pro have been a bit lax, resulting in massive sand bunker

Pebble Beach, Scottsdale and Bay Hill courses and PGA Pro presents an enjoyable way of searching for that eternal Hole-In-One.

Peter Sharpe

LATEST GAME SPECIALS



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Win 95**



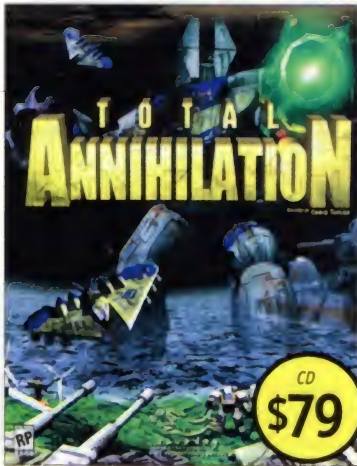
Twinsen's Odyssey Win 95



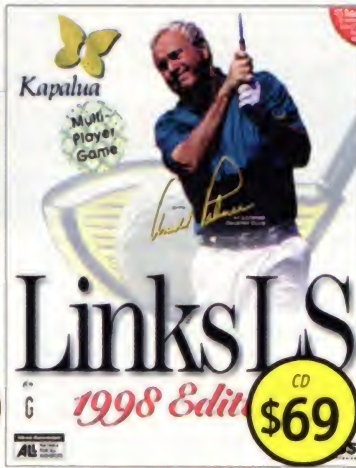
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COMPAQ Presario 4810/4830 Minitower

Compaq are continuing their push into the 'PC as home entertainment device' arena, and now they have a couple of high spec models designed to make the experienced power user drool with pleasure while still remaining friendly towards the newer users. The two models, the 4810 and 4830 feature top end processors and fairly decent components as well, though as per usual there are a few areas which could bear improvement. The 4830 model is kitted out with a top of the line 266MHz P2



System Specs

	4810	4830
Processor	233MHz MMX	266MHz MMX
Memory	32MB SDRAM	32Mb SDRAM
Hard Drive	4GD HD IDE	6.5Gb IDE
CD-Drive	24X Max speed	24X Max Speed
Cache	256kb Pipeline	512kb Pipeline
Expansion Slots	2 ISA, 2 PCI, 1 PCI/ISA, modem slot	
Sound	JBL Pro speakers, Digital Surround Sound	
Sound Card	16 bit sound card	
Graphics	S3 ViRGE/GX 64-bit graphics accelerator, 2MB SGRAM memory	
Monitor	15/17inch	17 inch
Modem	33.6kbps (upgradeable to 56k)	
Software	Win 95	Win 95
Price	\$4,299	\$4,795 (w/15" monitor)

The new 4800 series, along with a number of Compaq users

processor, a 512k pipeline burst cache, 32MB of SDRAM, and a 24 speed CD drive, which is very respectable indeed. However, as with many other big corporation mass consumer oriented models, they've skimped just a little in the graphics and sound areas. With both the 4810 and 4830 you get a 2MB (SGRAM) S3 Virge graphics accelerator and a 16 bit sound card of indeterminate origin, which as you will know isn't the best that money can buy - and yet again there's no dedicated 3D accelerator, like a 3Dfx card. The Virge GX does feature hardware 3D acceleration, but it just doesn't begin to

measure up to the likes of the 3DFX. Still, these are fairly minor quibbles, and easy to remedy with an upgrade. At \$4,299 and \$4,795 respectively, the 4810 and 4830 are competitively priced compared to clone machines available out there, in part because though they don't quite match up on price the warranty and security of purchasing a system from a known and reputable dealer tends to cancel out the hike in price. Also, there's a good deal of software included with both machines, covering plenty areas of interest: games, productivity, the internet, photo manipulation, and plenty more as well.

The unique Compaq access panel has been retained, with one touch internet buttons, sleep modes, CD music controls, an instant 'on' button, and volume controls all within easy reach, as they're placed on the top of the MiniTower. So, the price is comparatively decent, the equipment is mostly excellent, and it looks like Compaq are getting their act together regarding high end power users - they just need to go that extra step in hardware selection and they'll right where we want 'em to be.

NETWAVE MxV.34/ISDN combo modem card

Modems are pretty much standard equipment nowadays on most PCs. They're struggling to keep up with the demand for transfer speeds required though, even with the latest 56kbps standard should that ever take off. For a long, long time ISDN has been touted as a possible successor to analog modem technology (at least in the interim between analog modems and fibre-optic connections). In Australia at least, an ISDN line has remained out of the price reach of most average type people, and Telstra's policy in this area hasn't helped matters either. However, with the recent deregulation of telco's it might, just might, become an attractive option for data hungry people, though realistically this is fairly doubtful. Enter Vivid technology, who've placed a bet in both camps and gone with a combined analog modem (33.6k, upgradeable to 56k) and digital ISDN card.. The NetWave comes with a diagnostic program, and is capable of full-duplex voice communication to boot. Retail price is \$299.00.



myth

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DVD

•Creative Labs Encore DXR2 DVD drive •Diamond Multimedia Maximum DVD kit

We've all been hearing about DVD drives for so long that you might excused if your eyes have glazed over and you're thinking 'yeah, right! DVD is just a conspiracy designed to keep conversations going at geek meetings'. However, this time we've got real DVD drives! Well, real faxed press releases about DVD drives, at least. Yep, Australia has (finally) just begun it's journey down the DVD path, (or maybe we're just being paid by Cancer Man to continue the myth and annoy geeks everywhere. Trust no-one).

Anyway, I promise, it's true. Both

Diamond and Creative Labs are about to release DVD drives, right here in Australia. Honest. Both come with an Mpeg2 decoder board included for full screen playback on your computer monitor, though there are outputs for composite and s-video, allowing connection to your TV. Whichever you choose, you should be able to look forward to up to 480 lines of horizontal resolution (which is around 60 more than laserdisc), with your choice of screen size, versions, ratings and languages. And there's also digital and analog audio outputs as well, for

Dolby Digital surround sound (AC-3) and stereo speakers respectively.

There's even games ready in DVD format, too. Well they're actually old games like Wing Commander IV, Silent Steel and

Spy Craft re-released in DVD format, but still, they are bundled with the Diamond Maximum kit along with some movie trailers from Warner Media, which is a nice touch.

DVD System Specs

Diamond Maximum DVD Kit	Creative Labs Encore
Req's:	
P90, Win95, 16MB RAM	P133, Win95, 16mb Ram
Access Time	
DVD 200ms CD 130ms	DVD 170ms CD 90ms
Transfer rates	
Not supplied	DVD 2700kb/s (2x DVD) CD 3600kb/s (20x CD)max
Buffer Memory	
256k	512k
Video format support	
MPEG-1 MPEG-2 NTSC @ 30fps	MPEG-1 MPEG-2 NTSC @ 30fps
Disk format support	
DVD-ROM DVD-Video CD-ROM XA Photo CD Video CD CD-I CD-G Multi-session (PhotoCD, CD extra)	DVD-ROM DVD-Video CD-ROM XA PhotoCD Video CD CD-I Enhanced music CD Multi session (PhotoCd, Cd extra) CD-R (!)

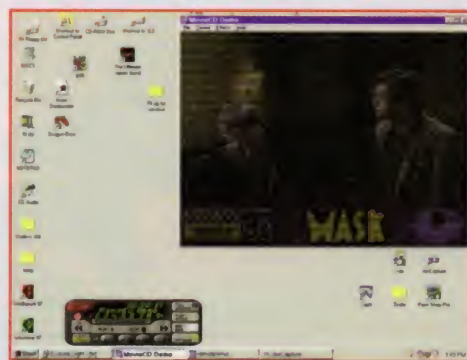
Movie CD

With DVD drives upon the horizon, you'd have to wonder why Sirius Publishing has chosen now to launch their new CD movie player, called imaginatively enough 'MovieCD'. Well,

one of the reasons why (and a pretty good one at that) is the system specifications required to run the movies full screen at a decent resolution and framerate. Though specs aren't clear as yet, DVD drives will require a fairly decent PC set up to run, while MovieCD will run upon a meagre 486/DX4 with a quad-speed CD, which puts it in the reach of most people with a home or office PC, and many with a notebook. On top of this, the CD movies themselves are expected to retail for around \$20-\$30 each, and there is a distinct possibility that they will also be made available for rental, just like a video cassette. Another advantage is that the software to play the movies is stored on the CD itself, so upgrading of the Motion Pixels 3.0 digital video software will be automatic with each new movie you play. Sirius Publishing have signed deals with a number of home video companies and producers, so there will be a good array of movies available in the format, including giants like New Line Cinema, Miramar Productions, Trimark, and a host of others.

So, the price is good, it doesn't require an MPEG card, there will be big

name movies available, and the only question that remains is whether people will be happy to watch a movie on a monitor much smaller than their TV from a chair around 50cm away rather than a comfy couch a couple of metres back from the TV.





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Combine Monster 3D with Monster Sound and you'll experience "The Ultimate Gaming Experience!"

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Soccer™ '96, Descent™ II: Destination Quartzon 3D, MechWarrior® 2, Scorched Planet™, a Microsoft™ WIN 95 Sampler CD 2 and over fifteen other monstrous games that'll leave you begging for mercy.

And you better listen up, because if you're not experiencing Diamond Multimedia's outrageous Monster Sound 3D PCI sound card, you're really missing something. Monster Sound provides true CD-quality 3D positional audio—with up to 24 independent audio streams—and support for Microsoft's DirectSound and DirectSound 3D APIs. It also comes bundled with a suite of advanced audio applications. Monster Sound will do for your ears what Monster 3D does for your PC graphics.

Better run for cover, because the Monster Sound 3D & Monster 3D are coming to get you.

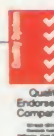
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IS DOS DEAD?

Many hardcore gamers feared Windows 95 when it first appeared. After growing up with, and mastering DOS, we saw Win 95 as a pretty novelty for office networks. Games? Yeah right. Win 3.11 had taught us all we needed to know about GUIs and their usefulness for games.

We had DOS. Clueless Newbies would stare in awe at the arcane magic we possessed. Any old command line trick could impress the hell out of folks that only lived in GUIs. We were all powerful. DOS was going to be with us forever!

We had the power. 630K or more of free conventional memory was our best party trick, but just as easily we could jump between either of the 2 memory types - Expanded or Extended. And then the really fancy stuff started. Smartdrive, ohh baby. Speed.

Why did we love it though? It was ugly, illogical, messy, convoluted and was a yoke around the neck of serious game developers. Parochial, emotional loyalty perhaps? For an operating system?!!! A sad, ancient and doomed one at that... Something is wrong here...

It is time for some level headed, informed comment. Lacking staff with these qualities, we instead turned to our esteemed technical writers Ashton Mills, Garry Wallis and Jere Lawrence. Their brief was "Is DOS Dead?" and to keep it to 700 words each. Let the debate begin.



Ashton Mills

PowerPlay's any-OS-but-Windows crusader has his say on the dying days of DOS...

DOS is good. DOS is great. Heck, I'd even say it was sexy but I'm likely to receive strange comments from PowerPlay's deputy ed, Gareth "Hat Hair" Jones. For most of us, DOS has been there with us since we were mere babes in arms learning to harness the awesome gaming potential of the PCs in front of us. If I think hard enough, I can even remember when I first discovered PKZIP and how it meant that I could fit more games on a disk... Er, but that's beside the point. Once upon a time, DOS was the only OS we had and anyone who wanted to use a PC had to become a master of the command line.

And this wasn't a bad thing. It meant that when Windows materialized on the scene that people knew how to use their PCs. Nowadays you mention that you prefer DOS to do certain file operations and you get strange looks from people who don't even know what DOS is. Very sad.

The command line has advanced so much over the years that there is no file operation in Windows that can't be done faster in DOS. Don't believe me? Try deleting a subdirectory tree in Windows Explorer. That's right, find the darned thing first in the directory tree, press 'DEL' and... what's that? You're being prompted by 'The Man' about deleting EXEs? Tell him to bugger off and press 'Yes to all' and now watch as pretty files fly past into a bin and... Sheesh, in this time I could have performed the following DOS operation ten times: 'Deltree Windows /y'. One command, no prompting, instant.

The command line is an efficient method of using your machine, it takes some know-how to learn how to use it, but once mastered nothing compares (as any UNIX user can tell you). Better still, get a hold of 4DOS (you can use it with Windows) and read the docs. This makes DOS' old COMMAND.COM seem like trying to put on a jumper when you've got no arms.

Don't get me wrong, Windows has its place. Gamewise it has to be said that DOS has served many loyal long years as a gaming platform, but it IS dying out. Not because it's functionally not powerful enough, not at all. For two simple reasons: a) it's easier to program for Windows because everything (video, sound, 3D, etc.) is standardised (this is a good thing, it means programmers can get on with the biz of writing games) and b) Windows is easier to use, so it attracts a larger market of less computer-proficient people and the market attracts developers.

In other words, progress is killing DOS. And, though I love this command line OS, I have to agree that progress is not a bad thing. I like Windows (when it works) but I mix my use between using the GUI and opening up a DOS window to perform certain tasks. Same goes for any OS actually, even in OS/2 or NT I open up a DOS or OS/2 box to perform common tasks — it's just easier — the command line is all about putting you in touch with your PC.

So I love DOS. It does what I want quickly and easily, and that's what counts. Plus, DOS games are generally faster. A game in DOS is the ONLY program running, it effectively becomes your 'OS'. All CPU power goes to the game. In Windows, you've still got it running in the background, polling for interrupts like CTRL-ESC and sucking up RAM that could otherwise be used by a game — no matter how you want to phrase it the fact is simple — the whole machine isn't being dedicated to your game.

There is no doubt, DOS is dying — but it's not dead yet. You may not realise, but even Windows 95 runs off DOS. As long as Windows 95 is around, DOS is automatically around, and so far from dead.

Bretheren, I ask you to show DOS the respect it deserves, let it go slowly holding its head high with honour — ten plus years of service is an eternity in the computer industry. Take advantage of it while you still can.

Garry Wallis

DOS - still some life in the old devil yet.

GUI based OS's like Windows and OS2 WARP have opened up the PC to a much wider audience. New PC users can relate to pointing and clicking much better than remembering commands and their related syntax's as with DOS (Disk Operating System). Take DOS's Copy, Move and Xcopy functions; all these commands can be accomplished in Windows 95 with just one mouse click and move. DOS based applications like word processors, DTP applications cannot portray the printed output on screen, because DOS is a fixed width text based OS, it is a matter of print and see. On the other hand GUI based applications have the ability to display the information as it is going to appear on the printer (WYSIWYG) which makes more sense to users. Games are totally at home in DOS, they have total rein of all system resources, but heaven forbid, what if a badly programmed game crashes, a reboot and reload is usually needed. Games running under Windows 95 can (most of the time) be stopped if they die and control returned to the OS, a total reboot is very rarely needed.

Most users that have had exposure to DOS will know that it has one very cool feature that Windows 95 (OS2 has Rexx) can't accomplish (apart from opening a DOS box and doing it!). This being scripting or batch file processing as it is known in DOS, this is one feature that Windows is sorely missing. A batch file allows you to accomplish tasks without needing to directly type each individual command into the DOS shell. Autoexec.bat is an example of a batch file, it allows common tasks like running certain applications to be automated. You can even get a batch file to accept user input and then perform different tasks accordingly. The simple DOS batch file below creates a directory on the C drive that the user specifies when calling the batch file. It then copies all 8-character files that start with S and end in P with any extension to the directory the user has entered.

```
MD C:\%1
COPY C:\S?????P.* C:\%1
```

This batch file is very simplistic but it gives you the idea of what can be done with DOS batch files. The series of question marks tells DOS that these characters can be filled with any character so all files beginning with S and ending in P are copied regardless of the characters in-between. The asterix is a general Wild card character and means that anything with an extension will be copied. Batch files can be very complex I have seen example batch files that are practically an application in their own right. One look on the net and you will see masses of little programs that have been designed for batch files in mind. DOS's own Choice command is one good example.

Try to accomplish the same task in Windows 95 without using a DOS batch file and you will see that it really can't be automated to this degree. The ability to perform such tasks in a batch file is great for clearing out your Temp folder when your PC boots or copying important files to a directory for backup every time your PC shuts down, for example.

Windows, but if you script is written in that scripting language it cannot be guaranteed it will function on another. Windows needs it's own built in scripting language, OS2 has had Rexx for years. Rexx itself dates back even further, there is even a version of Rexx scripting for the Amiga range of computers (ARexx).

There is hope Windows 98 - Memphis will have scripting abilities (about time to!) which will allow manipulation of windows programs in the same way DOS allows manipulation in batch files. Tasks such as creating a new shortcut can be accomplished without the need to go through the Wizard every time and will allow very fine tuning of tasks like removing the words "Shortcut to" whenever you create a shortcut. When Windows 98 finally ships a lot more users will start to move away from DOS batch files and use the in-built Windows scripting. Windows 98 may still have a DOS version of its own but less and less users will need to use it. There of course will always be a need for DOS based OS's, industrial embedded systems for example use a 32bit real-time version of DOS because of the low overheads that a DOS OS provides.

I really believe that DOS is nearly dead as far as us gamers are concerned, although don't expect it to disappear altogether for home computer use until after the releases of Windows 98 and Windows NT 5.0. With the release of the next generation Windows versions, hopefully Microsoft will have got DirectX right (OpenGL framework, pretty please?) and in-built scripting, available in all Windows versions.



Jere Lawrence

PowerPlay's pragmatic realist just wants the best OS for games - and that ain't DOS.

The question of "Is DOS dead?" is one that poses a mild dilemma. Obviously, because Windows 95 currently requires DOS as a software interrupt handler within 16 bit operations, and is therefore being used, it isn't officially dead. With Windows 95, it's more bundled. The real crux of the question though is: "Is DOS useful". Which can clearly be answered with a capital NO.

Before I go on further and because of the sensitive nature of OS zealotry and generalised labelling, I'm going to clarify one thing. That I couldn't give a damn what OS is king of the hill, I just want to play games.

That's me, my life, my purpose. As the first generation of "Computer Kid" I grew up with computer games and saw the revolution of an entire industry. I just want to play games, after all, isn't that why we read (or work for) magazines like PowerPlay?

So if tomorrow, the greatest game in the world came out and required Linux 0.65B (B for beta), you could bet a partition would be set aside on my hard drive, OS installed and game played. The OS is a means to the end, the end being the game itself.

That said, it's still worth pointing out that Windows 95 is quite an effective operating system to play games on. So far, it is the only platform that has specific drivers for games designed to optimise your hardware. Those drivers being DirectX. The closest DOS has is UniVBE which will map Vesa/Vesa 2.0 commands to your video card offering a performance increase, but not anywhere near the functionality of DirectX.

Of course the biggest advantage to all of this is a part of DirectX called Direct3D. Could you imagine what the 3D-card revolution would have been like if DOS was the most used operating system?

Just like other market dominating companies, lesser cards would have been driven out by a lack of programming support until there was essentially only one choice. Before you know it, Internet zealots are making up wild world dominating conspiracies about said company when it was probably their purchase in the first place that caused it. As it stands now, there are a wealth of 3D cards that can be used, with Windows 95 handling the drivers. The beauty being that the same game will run on multiple hardware configurations with no extra effort needed from the programming team.

This flexibility of Windows 95 has in effect brought the cost of hardware down for you the consumer. Why? Because there are now a selection of cards to choose from. If you have enough money to spare, you can buy a top of the line 3Dfx. If however you're strapped for cash, you can purchase a cheaper Rendition based card.

The games will still be accelerated and you have saved money or even been able to purchase an accelerator, where before you couldn't. Ultimately though, the biggest way Windows 95 saves you money is through the hardware vendors competing with each other. They're all after a sale and if you have freedom of choice because of an OS, one of the ways they'll choose to be competitive is in reduction of their prices.

Windows 95 is also a multi-tasking operating system, where DOS limits you to one major task at a time. DOS has the ability to run small programs called TSR's that do run in the background, but there is no way to monitor these processes, and if there are more than 1, kill them (easily).

There's also that little 640K consideration to look at. Every time you run one of those TSR's your massive 640K of useable executable memory slowly whittles away until you can't do a thing. Windows 95 however allows you to use all your installed memory. If you have 64Mb on board, that will be made available to multiple simultaneously running applications.

Finally there's that little "thing" that has sprung up called the Internet. Imagine trying to use the Net in a world dominated by DOS! How many people use the Web, whilst flipping a file or chatting through IRC. Imagine trying to do that in DOS with 640K? Ugh.

So In conclusion, Is DOS Useful? Sure it is, if you want to run Wordstar from the early eighties. If however you want to embrace the technology of now and get maximum usefulness out of your PC, then DOS is about as useless as it gets.

WELCOME TO THIS MONTH'S 3D TECHNEWS, WHERE WE LOOK AT THE LATEST IN 3D HARDWARE AND 3D ACCELERATED GAMES THAT ARE IN PROGRESS, OR DUE TO BE RELEASED.

SHADOW GAMES

First up, we have *Shadows of the Empire*, included on this month's cover CD! (Remember to check \technews for the 3D games). The demo includes the first level, which is the snowspeeder evacuation of Hoth. This is the penultimate Star Wars experience. From downing probes, to harpooning and tripping the massive walkers.

Utilising Direct 3D, 3Dfx, Rendition, Matrox owners, all of you should be able to experience the thrill of a brilliant Star Wars 3D action game. The 3Dfx version is by far the fastest, with the Rendition doing quite a good job, but still quite jerky. SOTE is due out September 10th.

According to the developers at 3D Realms, *Shadow Warrior* should be shipping soon, with the 3Dfx patch available around the same time.

WHAT'S IN A NAME!

Not to be confused with the Diamond Monster 3D, Matrox have named their 3D add-on board the M3D as well. Confused? The M3D will ship with *Ultimate Race* (plus two other titles). It has 4MB of SGRAM and utilises the PCX2. All this for US\$99. The ball is in your court Diamond.

HEXEN 2 DEMO DELAYED

By the time you read this, The *Hexen 2* demo should only be an issue away with the final release in stores. That is unless any more slips occur. Steve Stringer, Producer of *Hexen 2* had this to say:

"Hi Everyone, I have to apologise for the fact that, despite what I promised and what you may have read, the demo will not be ready today. We have some last minute networking bugs to work out that will definitely enhance your deathmatch and coop play experience.

Everyone involved with the project feels that it is important to fix these bugs as we want to give you the best demo possible. We truly wanted to get the demo to you today, but we feel that the fixes will



(clockwise from top) *Sub Culture*, *Ultimate Race*, gangster-sim *Respect Inc.*, more polygon gangsters, *Powerplay 98* (no relation), and *Hexen 2*

be worth the wait. We hope that you, our loyal community, will understand and be patient for a few more days."

ION STORM

Netheads who want to hear what John Romero is up to can find out on a Net Radio show called *Storm Front*. It's a weekly show that features news from John Romero's *Ion Storm*. It's on Pseudo Online Networks, using Real Audio. A Real Audio Player is required to listen to the show.

<http://www.pseudo.com/net-cast/shows/stormfront/index.html>

INTERNATIONAL RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

The *International Rally Championship* demo should be released any day now, so you can expect to see it on next month's cover CD. IRC will fully support the 3Dfx and has you racing in a Rally with fog effects, transparency maps, particle effects from splash-

ing water, and bystanders... that you don't run down.

F/A-18 HORNET

A new flight sim to feature the F/A-18 Hornet is currently Work In Progress for Graphics Simulations Corporation. Hornet Korea, as opposed to being an add-on for the original Hornet sim will be a completely stand-alone product with support for 3D accelerators.

Hornet Korea will feature native 3Dfx Glide API support, with texture-mapped graphics. Or for unbelievable speed and frame rate, you can turn it all off and use the existing sims flat-shaded polygon look.

SUB CULTURE

Word around is that our friends at Ubi Soft are finishing up a title called Sub Culture. It seems that Sub Culture has been in development on and off for 3 years now by Criterion Studios and is finally close to release. Reports indicate



(above) International Rally Championship (left) the 3D re-working of Montezuma's Revenge (bottom) the original Montezuma's. Remember the rolling skulls?



that the quality and feel of the game are absolutely superb and this title is destined for greatness.

In Sub Culture, you are part of a miniature civilization beneath the waves during a time of conflict. You can either side with the Bohines (psychotic & narcotic hippies) or with the Prochas (in control of the state).

It doesn't matter who you choose

because as the game progresses you can change your mind a bit and make a stand with the other side. It's entirely up to you. To survive, you'll need to trade, pick up items for trading, kill other fish and explore.

Freedom of movement is also contrasted with Descent style caves and an Abyss with which to investigate.

Graphically this is the one! The feeling of being under water has been captured and recreated in a stunning manner. Rolling waves above you, sunlight glaring through the water and the textured surfaces along the seabed are beautifully recreated. There are even plenty of fish to see; the Lion Fish, Rays, and even Sea Horses!

Mind you don't think that those fish are friendly, the Angel-Fish goes straight for your strobe lights. Luckily you've got a good selection of weapons to gib it to bits with. Greenpeace activists have also been catered for with Turtles (that can be giped to bits) and other features such as plants to add to the fantastic scenery.

BENCHMARK THIS!

Mercury Research have been hard at work benchmarking 3D cards, here's the results they came up with on the latest 3D boards.

Shown below are the 3D WinBench scores from the report.

For the first time Rendition have managed to beat the Voodoo 3Dfx with their new V2200 chip. Of course this is going to mean Voodoo retaliation in the form of a new card. Sigh. Our 3D cards haven't even had a chance to collect a little dust before we're going to need to upgrade again.

Remember the "3D cards will break the vicious processor upgrade cycle claims"? Well now we have the vicious 3D cycle. Anyway, 1 minutes silence for Voodoo who has finally been dethroned after almost a year of domination.

FLYING CORPS GOLD

Flying Corps, which has recently had a number of patches available for 3D card owners, will be revamped in a new boxed product with 3Dfx and D3D support built in. Titled Flying Corps Gold, you can upgrade for a small price if you're an existing Flying Corps owner. Other additions include new planes (a Fokker D7), a mission editor and improved

INCUBATION

Blue Byte are making a turn based strategy game around the impressive Extreme Assault 3D engine. Here's some Bluebyte blurb:

"There are some noticeable differences between Incubation and other turn based strategy games, with the most notable ones being the graphics engine and the interface. Incubation uses the same technology that is found in the recent release Extreme Assault.

Intel's MMX technology and 3D accelerators will bring the graphics to an unprecedented level in action games. Incubation makes great use

BOARD	SCORE
Nvidia Riva 128	222.0
Rendition V2200	208.0
3Dfx Voodoo	193.0
3Dfx Voodoo Rush	152.0
3Dlabs Permedia 2	149.0
ATI Rage Pro	137.0
Number Nine Revolution	128.0
NEC-VL	117.0
PowerVR V2	
3Dlabs Permedia Delta	100.0
Trident 3Dimage 975	90.5
Trident 9397	82.1
S3 ViRGE/GX-2	71.3
Matrox MGA2 (WRAM)	64.2
Cirrus GD5465	63.1
Matrox MGA (SGRAM)	56.7
ATI Rage 2	53.6
S3 ViRGE/GX	50.0
S3 ViRGE/DX	47.9
Rendition V1000E	39.1
S3 ViRGE/VX	37.5
Alliance AT3D	36.3
S3 ViRGE	31.2

Mercury Research

PC PowerPlay



of this engine and its features by giving players the ability to have a free-floating point of view. On the fly you can rotate the camera and zoom in and out on any object within the playing field. Everything is in 3D so the enemies and your platoon look highly detailed and realistic."

MONTEZUMA'S REVENGE

All you old gamers out there, remember a classic game on the C64 and Atari 800 called Montezuma's Revenge? Well it's back but now in glorious 3D! The original 8-bit game will even be included with the release.

BEST QUAKE 2 CARD

Brian Hook of id has been benchmarking to put a rest to the constant "What 3D accelerator is best for Quake 2". See the table below for his results.

He went on to explain:

"It looks like the OpenGL MCD is a pretty bad performance drain for various reasons I haven't quite narrowed down. If/when NVidia do an ICD, their performance should go up quite a bit."

"Currently only Voodoo gives us the option of disabling syncing to vertical retrace. As you can tell, it can make a pretty significant difference. In the future triple buffering may make this issue go away to a large degree."

"We expect to see more performance improvements from the PowerVR, however we only saw a 10% performance jump in performance when we tested on a P2/266, which indicates we may be approaching the limits of their current hardware."

"The RIVA looked pretty damn good. The primary deficiencies with the part are that it can only go to 4MB and that it doesn't have an OpenGL driver under Win95. Hopefully the latter will be taken care of in the upcoming months, and the former will be taken care of by their next generation part."

CARMAGEDDON

Addicts of Carmageddon will be pleased to know that SCI recently unveiled news of the long-awaited add-on for Carmageddon, the 'Splat Pack'. The 'Splat Pack' will offer owners of the original Carmageddon more tracks, more cars, more network levels and more environments to explore, as well as support for the 3Dfx. The release date is set for mid-November.

FORMULA 1 97

Formula 1, which has only been out on the PC for the last 3 months is due for an upgrade already. Formula 1 97, scheduled for Q3 97, will have a much more optimised graphics engine and features such as a true cockpit view with steering wheel.

Other items from Psygnosis include Respect Inc., a nice 3D-adventure using cartoon animation and character rendering. It's a 1930s Chicago style graphic adventure that brings a fun 3D approach to the world of the Mob. Respect Inc. puts you in the role of a small-time gangster desperate to make the big league. Only the right combination of intimidation, bribery, violence and corruption will earn you enough respect to play with the big boys. Due autumn 1998.

POWERPLAY 98

Hey, they're using our name! Litigation, litigation! Anyway, Powerplay 98 is the upcoming 3D Hockey game from Radical, makers of the Playstation series of Hockey sims. (-sarcasm on- Now that we have 3D accelerators, isn't it funny how all the Playstation developers are coming over. -sarcasm off-)

Powerplay 98 will come with two versions. One is a 2D, low-res version which is very playable on a P90 or less. The second being totally 3D accelerated via Direct 3D.

The 3D version is phenomenally smooth and gorgeously animated,



(above) Quake 2 multiplayer shots and cyberbaddy
(left) Forsaken and more cyberaliens, this time from Incubator



SUPERBIKES

The people at Milestone are working on a ManxTT type game called Superbikes, which features over 12 tracks in Europe, the US and Japan to race on. Bikes such as Yamaha, Ducati, Honda, Suzuki and Kawasaki.

The real draw for most gamers though will be the sustained 30fps-frame rate and detailed models to rival Sega's Manx TT coin-op. Both a software-only and a hardware-accelerated version will be available.

SPEEDTRIBES

Another upcoming product from THQ is SpeedTribes. Their blurb had this to say:

"SpeedTribes, a real time 3-D game for PC CD-ROM. It propels the player into the dangerous realm of the SpeedTribes - heavily armed aercycle riders."

"All are devoted to the sheer speed of their machines, the pure violence of combat and the ultimate glory of survival. As the player adapts to this strange, bio-organic world, he must first align himself as a member of one of the six different SpeedTribes, and then begin his training in any of the six arenas where each SpeedTribe has set obstacles, traps and confrontations."

Expected 1998.

TASTY TIDBIT

Star Trek first Contact is currently in development and will use the Unreal engine; hence it will be of course 3D accelerated.

Jere Lawrence

QUAKE 2 PERFORMANCE

3Dfx Voodoo	16bpp	GL_ZTRICK=1	no-sync mini-driver	31.8fps
3Dfx Voodoo	16bpp	GL_ZTRICK=0	no-sync mini-driver	30.1fps
3Dfx Voodoo	16bpp	GL_ZTRICK=1	sync mini-driver	26.1fps
3Dfx Voodoo	16bpp	GL_ZTRICK=0	sync mini-driver	24.3fps
RIVA128	16bpp	GL_ZTRICK=0	OpenGL MCD	23.8fps
RIVA128	16bpp	GL_ZTRICK=1	OpenGL MCD	23.8fps
PowerVR PCX2	16bpp	GL_ZTRICK=0	mini-driver	23.0fps
Permedia2	16bpp	GL_ZTRICK=1	OpenGL ICD	18.4fps
Permedia2	16bpp	GL_ZTRICK=0	OpenGL ICD	18.3fps

* WARNING: these benchmarks only pertain to Quake 2. They don't reveal anything about the overall performance of the card.

KICK ASS

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Acceleration
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'PowerVR Ready'
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DREAMS

OF 100MHz BUS SPEEDS, TILLAMOOK'S, AND DESCHUTE.

Looming on the horizon are the new generation of CPUs from Intel and AMD. You think a 200 MMX Pentium is special? Start dreaming about 650MHz rip snorters...

Intel has got a sure fire winner on it's hands with it's Pentium II CPU. Benchmark results conducted all over the world are being shattered by Pentium II powered systems. The current Pentium II PCs are being held back by the now out dated 440FX chipset. Intel should have released the 440LX chipset by the time you read this. To refresh your memory the 440LX will allow Pentium II systems to utilise ultra fast SDRAM and graphics cards designed around the AGP (Advanced Graphics Port) specification. Intel have great plans for the Pentium II and the other future CPUs which include the second generation of the Pentium II CPU (100MHz system bus speed!), the Deschute (Pentium Pro II, maybe?) CPU and some rather interesting CPUs designed for the mobile market.

PENTIUM II - THE NEXT GENERATION

When Intel first released the Klamath CPU, the initial benchmark results were not at all pleasing so they went back to the drawing board and released the Pentium II. The current Pentium II CPUs run as high as 300MHz and are blisteringly fast. At present they have no equal in terms of overall processing performance. The AMD K6 is almost on par with an equally clocked Pentium II, but the K6 cannot touch the awesome floating-point performance that the Pentium II has (great for 3D).

In the first quarter of next year Intel plan to release their 333MHz version of the Pentium II and this should be very fast. The fun really doesn't start to begin until Intel release their 350 and 400MHz version of the Pentium II that takes advantage of a 100MHz system

bus. These new Pentium IIs will require another new chipset that is code-named the 440BX. The 440BX will be released to coincide with the release of the 350 and 400MHz Pentium IIs, and will be the first chipset to support this 100MHz system bus speed.

INTEL NEWEST CPU'S ON THE MOVE

The Pentium MMX seems to have been adopted as the standard for high-end notebook's and appears to have peaked at 233MHz at its current die size. Intel plan to shrink the Pentium MMXs die size down from 0.35 micron to 0.28 microns, thus producing greater yields and higher attainable clock speeds. Expect these shrunken Pentium MMX chips to appear on the market very shortly. The Tillamook; as they're currently known, will probably reach speeds as high as 300MHz. These processors are designed for the mobile market as they have very low power consumption and produce less heat. The most interesting thing about the Tillamook is the fact that it is 'socket 7' compatible so us gamers could theoretically use them. The Tillamook would make a perfect low-cost games machine. Coupled with a 3DFX based chipset accelerator it would have to be near the top of the top 20' list of the ultimate gaming machines. It would be interesting to see how a Pentium MMX running at 300MHz compares with a Pentium II running at the same clock speed.

Another mobile processor to be released will be a low power version of the Pentium II, which will probably include a smaller cache to keep overall size down. This Mobile Pentium II CPU will use Intel's new mobile processor module, which contains not only the

CPU, but also the level 2 cache and the chipset for extremely easy upgrading and expansion.

THE FUTURE

Sometime In the second quarter of 1998, Intel plan to release the next CPU based on the P6 Pentium Pro architecture. Code-named Deschute, this CPU will have some quite major architectural enhancements. These will including a special level 2 cache scheme which, unlike the present PDSRAM (Pipeline burst Static RAM) cache, can run at the same speed as the processor. The Deschute will also have a 100MHz system bus, and may include an increase in the level 1 cache. It is also still unknown whether the Deschute will support the new MMX2 instruction set.

The Deschute will debut at a speed of 400MHz and will later appear in speeds of 450, 500, 550MHz variations. The Deschute will then continue to increase in clock speed and may even reach

speeds as high as 650MHz by the end of the century! The Deschute will also come in three different L2 cache varieties including 2MB, 1MB and 512KB. The higher sized cache versions will be produced for the server side of the market. The Deschute CPU will require another new motherboard change, as this CPU will connect to the newer Slot 2 style SEC cartridge. The Deschute will also require a new chipset, which is currently dubbed the 440NX. It will initially be aimed at the server market as it has the ability to expand to quad-processor configurations. Like all Intel CPU's before, it will eventually make it down to our desktops.

With Intel's only other real rival in the high-end x86 game being AMD I would have say that this line up of releases is going to be very hard to top. It just waits to be seen what AMD can come up with, but I am sure they have something up their sleeves.

Garry Wallis

AGP - Initial tests not so promising

Initial AGP testing performed by Tom at Tom's Hardware Guide (www.sysdoc.pair.com) have not shown a tremendous increase in speed with AGP graphics cards over the current PCI versions of the same cards. Tom was able to test an early 440LX chipset-based motherboard and has been able to acquire early beta releases of the AGP graphics boards and DirectX5 beta drivers from some of the big names in the 3D graphics business. As results show there is obviously still a lot more optimization that can be done to both the firmware on the AGP cards and the DirectX drivers.

We should hopefully see an increase in performance with production 3D AGP cards and their official release versions of the drivers, but I don't think we should expect AGP to be as fast as we first thought it would. The AGP specification is still in its first incarnation, and like the first PCI specifications, will only get better with age. We certainly do hope these initial benchmark results are only slightly better than their PCI counterparts because of slow buggy AGP drivers and beta firmware and not because of problems inherent in the AGP specification itself. We will keep you updated.

ESTIMATED RELEASE DATES FOR INTEL'S NEW PROCESSORS

1ST QUARTER



2ND QUARTER



3RD QUARTER

CPU type	Bus Speed	Processor clock
Pentium II	66Mhz	233Mhz
	66Mhz	266Mhz
	66Mhz	300Mhz
Tillamook	66Mhz	200Mhz
	66Mhz	233Mhz
Pentium MMX	66Mhz	233Mhz

4TH QUARTER



CPU type	Bus Speed	Processor clock
Pentium II	66Mhz	333Mhz
Mobile-Pentium II	66Mhz	233Mhz
	66Mhz	266Mhz
Tillamook	66Mhz	166Mhz
	66Mhz	266Mhz

CPU type	Bus Speed	Processor clock
Mobile-Pentium II	66Mhz	300Mhz
Pentium II	100Mhz	350Mhz
	100Mhz	400Mhz
Deschute .5MB L2	100Mhz	100Mhz
Deschute 1MB L2	100Mhz	100Mhz
Deschute 2MB L2	100Mhz	100Mhz

CPU type	Bus Speed	Processor clock
Deschute .5MB L2*	100Mhz	450Mhz
Deschute 1MB L2*	100Mhz	450Mhz
Deschute 2MB L2*	100Mhz	450Mhz
Pentium II*	100Mhz	450Mhz



1ST QUARTER

2ND QUARTER

3RD QUARTER

4TH QUARTER

*Estimated release date sometime in second half 1998

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WINDOWS 98



It has been quite some time since Microsoft first announced the next incarnation of Windows 95; code-named Memphis. We were told that it should be released as Windows 97. As 1997 slowly slips by us, it is looking much like it could be late 1998 before we see Memphis (now called Windows 98 for obvious reasons) finally shipping. Microsoft have managed to ship two betas releases of Memphis in this time the latest Windows 98 (beta 2) has been distributed to more than 10,000 people for thorough testing. When the beta test bug reports have been ironed out Windows 98 should be ready for release soon thereafter.

What does Windows 98 have that Windows 95 doesn't? Well, quite a few things actually, Windows 98 is not just Windows 95 with the IE4.0 shell enhancements as a few people have speculated. The current build of Windows 98 has many enhancements likely to please gamers to CAD professionals.

Some of the new features in Memphis, Windows 98:

AUTOMATIC UPDATER - This interesting program is capable of knowing the status of your software and will download and install any upgrades that are available for you. If the upgrade causes problems, the Automatic updater program can revert your system back to its original state.

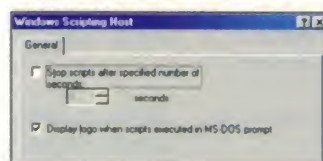
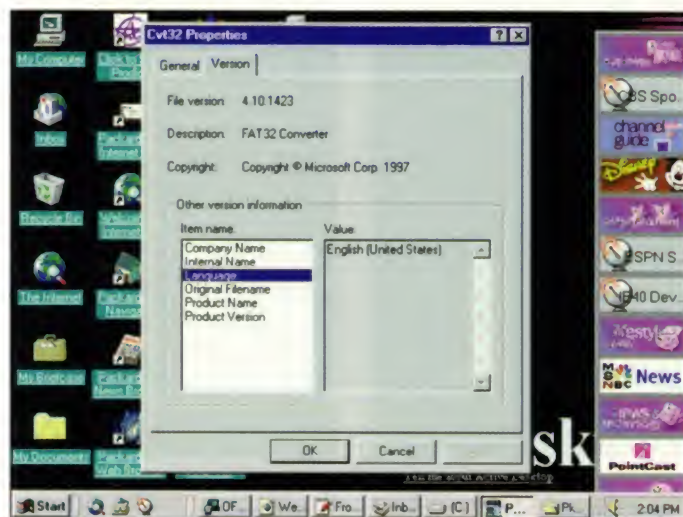


FAT32 - You may have already heard of the FAT32 file system before, if you haven't, what it does is allow large partition sizes without the cluster overhang that plagues the FAT16 file system. What this effectively means is that if you have a 2GB hard drive, one partition can be created under FAT32 that can be the full 2GB in size. A 2GB FAT32 partition will not experience the cluster overhang that a FAT16 partition would. FAT32 partitions would use a 2K-cluster size while FAT16 would use a whopping 32K-cluster size, which equates to a lot of wasted hard drive space. FAT32 partitions will also increase Windows overall read and write speeds to the hard drive. Users of Win95 OSR2 (4.00.950B) will already know about FAT32 and will upgrade to Windows 98 with ease. For the rest of us still using the old FAT16 file system Windows 98 will still function okay. Microsoft has included a converter in the Windows 98 release to convert your old FAT16 partitions to FAT32 without the need to reformat. Don't worry the program scans your hard drive to see if there are any applications that can not handle the new FAT32 file system, and will warn you if the application will have problems.

SYSTEM FILE CHECKER - This utility should have always been part of the Windows distribution. This utility will guard critical system files and make sure they are not corrupted or deleted if they do become corrupt System File Checker will re-install a good copy of the file for you, about time too.

TUNE UP WIZARD - This program keeps an eye on your system performance and if it notices performance loss will tell you ways it can be fixed to keep your system running at optimal speed.

BROADCAST ARCHITECTURE - With the use of a tuner card allows for TV and cable data streams to appear on your desktop. Internet content can then be combined with the video source, this could provide extra programming information or information about the current program being viewed.



(ABOVE) WINDOWS 98 FAT16 TO FAT32 CONVERTER APPLET
(LEFT) WINDOWS 98 SCRIPTING TOOL

WIN32 DRIVER MODEL (WDM)

- The Win32 Driver Model is a common driver set for both Windows 95 and Windows NT. The WDM will allow vendors to produce one common driver instead of producing separate ones for 95 and NT, only creating one driver will mean the vendors can spend more time debugging instead of writing the extra driver.

GREATER DEVICE SUPPORT

New device support has been added for new peripherals such as DVD-ROM/ROM, MMX instructions, Universal Serial Bus (USB), IEEE 1394 (Firewire), Multiple monitor screens and Accelerated Graphics Port (AGP).

DIRECTX 5.0 DRIVERS - The latest incarnation of DirectX provides new features that bring Win95

gaming to new heights. What ever happened to DirectX 4.0 Microsoft?

DirectX 5.0 offers new features that all gamers will definitely want. The DirectX 5.0 drivers should be available separately from Windows 98 and should be available now.

DIRECTX 5.0 - DirectX 5.0 will bring gamers one step closer to the ultimate gaming platform, if only Microsoft would listen to the game developers and include support within DirectX for OpenGL. The game developers will no doubt use OpenGL regards of Microsoft, but it would be nice to have the tight nit integration with the rest of the DirectX API's. DirectX with OpenGL support (DirectGL?) would effectively make Windows 95/98 the best gaming platform in the world.

Garry Wallis

Component New features

DirectX 5.0 Core	Support for the fabled AGP port.
DirectPlay	better support for Internet and modem play with increased stability and security.
DirectInput	Support for Force Feedback devices (hurrah!).
DirectSound 3D	Support for the new audio accelerators providing AC3 3D positional audio (i.e. Diamond Monster Sound).

LEGEND

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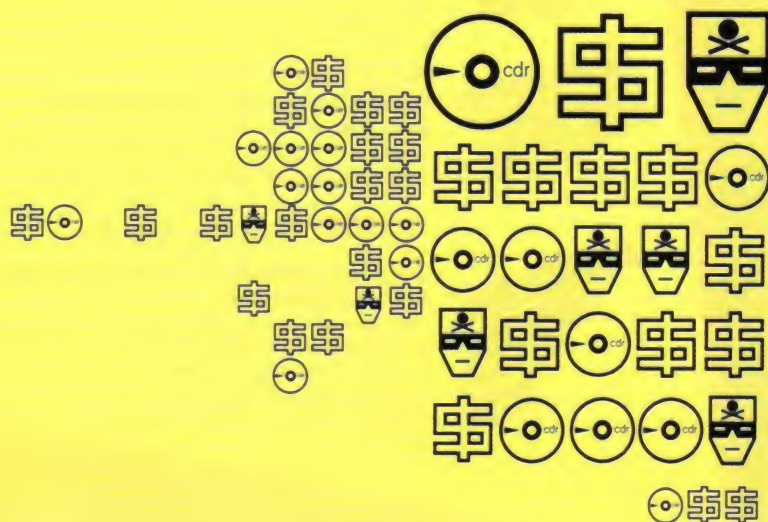


WINNER
ET6000



Superhighway Robbery

Gareth Jones



Countries like China and Russia have an amazing overall estimated piracy rate of about 95%, though both are topped by Vietnam, where a staggering 99% of all software on computers are illegal copies.

Computer games today are a huge industry and one that's seen marked growth lately, along with mainstream acceptance of the Internet and computers in general. Trafficking in illegal software has also become big business, and while those set with the task of tracking down and stopping software piracy have mostly concentrated on illegal copies of business software, piracy of games is also pretty damn rife.

You can forget about the pirates of old though, with their multicoloured beards, peg legs, shoulder mounted parrots and cries of 'ahoy matey' - today's pirates are a lot more organised, smarter, at times more dangerous, and command keyboards rather than ships. Modern pirates have managed to cost the software industry an estimated US\$11.2 billion (1) dollars last year. Countries like China and Russia have an amazing overall estimated piracy rate of about 95%, though both are topped by Vietnam, where a staggering 99% of all software on computers are illegal copies. Hong Kong is right up there too, where vendors selling gold disk copies of games and programs operate quite openly and seemingly without fear of reprisal, and it's through here that many pirate copies of console CD's come into Australia.

Nevertheless, figures like those above tend to make Australia's (estimated) figures of around 35% seem pretty inconsequential, but I've done it, and chances are that most of you at one time or another have dabbled in the black art of pirating software. Whether it's because you have a friend that has a friend that has a friend that has access to a 'wares' board, or you found one of the many web pages or IRC channels that trade in illegally cracked or copied software, or even if you just borrowed a copy of Quake, or Doom, or MS Word from a friend and installed it on your machine, it's all illegal. There's even quite a few unknown participants in the trade of illegal software - some dodgy vendors don't exactly follow copyright procedures when installing software on the package deals that they sell. Nevertheless, it's all illegal, and depending upon your point of view it's also immoral, and wrong.

Hacker = Dickhead?

It's a labyrinthine world, both figuratively and literally, once you start getting in to pirate software because there's so many different ways to go about it, and so many different ways of looking at what's being done that blanket statements like 'it's bad, they should all be locked up and the key thrown away' or the opposite, 'who cares if some of the multinational mega-corporations lose a couple of bucks because I don't pay for my OS', blanket statements like that just don't work at all. Neither, however, does the oft proffered proposition that those who crack protected software are just doing it for the challenge and resultant kudos of it, and they're only interested in breaking the program rather than distributing it. This may be so in many cases, but still once the software is 'cracked' it is distributed, and becomes just another commodity used for trade, and sometimes profit (either monetarily or status-wise). A number of people who were either active in the scene previously, or are presently active have made a comparison between pirate groups and street gangs. It's all about credibility within the tight community, they say, whoever gets a piece of software into the country first, or cracks a particularly difficult copy protected game first gains significant status in the community, and with that comes respect, awe and power.

It's not necessarily about getting the software for free, they say, because often they don't want, and don't even use, whatever it is they're couriering in or cracking. It's just about being the first, or being connected, knowing the right people, and having your .nfo or file_id.diz [2] file included with the game or application. Whatever the reasoning, however it is justified, the end result is that eventually the games and applications will filter down to the eagerly waiting hoards of people that have no such ethos, and just want it for free rather than paying for it.

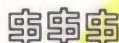
For Sale: Pirate Amiga games. \$5 per disk.

How is it being done though? In past times, piracy was still rampant. In the days of the ill-fated

Commodore Amiga (long may it live in our memories) there were even advertisements placed in newspapers offering pirate games for sale, some of which stayed there for at least a couple of years. One of the advertisers was bringing in games from overseas BBS and then selling them for profit. He was 12, and was neither concerned about the illegality of his operation or the possible repercussions, and as far as I know never got caught.

These were the days where a game would often fit upon one floppy disk (I can remember being blown away by the size of Dragon's Lair, which was 7 disks. Huge!), and there were a number of innovative ways to copy-protect a piece of software. The coolest sounding by far has to be the 'dongle', which is a small piece of hardware that's piggy backed on to the serial, parallel or keyboard port, and when the program in question ran it sent a signal

Eudora Light - [me, 11:53 AM 7/30/97, Re: warez q's]
File Edit Mailbox Message Transfer Special Tools Window Help
<none> Home Send
Date: Sat, 26 Jul 1997 20:10:39 +1000
To: Gareth PC Jones <gareth@Next.COM.AU>
Subject: Re: warez q's
>>>1. What exactly did you do (or do you do) regarding pirate software?
>>>These days I don't spend much time with new stuff cause theres so much of
>>>it. But a few years ago when piracy was way underground and in its prime I
>>>used to trade software for favours/perks and so on. Back then I had access
>>>to all the latest stuff whether it be applications or games or the latest
>>>hacking/phreaking techniques. I could distribute it and make a bundle of
>>>money like fellow pirates but most of the time but I just traded it with
>>>select groups of people I knew. I still have access to plenty of the new
>>>stuff but I just take it for granted now.
>>>2. How did you get into it?
>>>Its a funny thing really I've always been associated with arcade games since
>>>the age of 10. Whether it be arcade games or computer games I was an
>>>addict. Back in the days when the C64, and the Amiga were state of the
>>>arts machines piracy was widespread. It was easy to get cheap games by
>>>trading or just by buying copied games for as little as \$2 a disk crammed
>>>with up to 5 games. That was when I became first involved with piracy. I
>>>didn't consider it piracy at the time, just an easy method of getting new
>>>games.
>>>Later during my college years (around 1990), I was the type of guy who kept
>>>bouncing from course to course. I had difficulty studying because women
>>>were always a distraction. I'm no pc geek or techno wierdo, but I figured
>>>that to get far in my studies it would help to know a few smart people. I
>>>had no trouble making friends (especially the female variety) and one
>>>introduced me to a person who ran a Bulletin Board. This guy was dedicated
>>>to his work and we struck a relationship. I could tell he needed a
>>>girlfriend BADLY and I gave him pointers on picking up women, in return he
>>>introduced me to the world of computers, modems and bulletin boards. He got
>>>me started and quickly I made plenty of underground contacts. It kind of
>>>snowballed from there.
>>>3. What was the attraction? Was it free software or more of a prestige
>>>thing (i.e. being the first place in the country with a popular game, etc).
>>>Is it like a power thing?
>>>To me it was more of a power trip. I had the latest software in my hands
>>>before it even hit the streets months/weeks in advance. Even the latest
>>>tools of destruction came through my hands. Theres some stuff out there you
>>>wish didn't exist, sensitive stuff like Virus Creating tools and Terrorist
>>>Cookbooks. Nevertheless, it gave me a buzz. Think of it like this, imagine
>>>completing the full version of Doom weeks before its released. It's like
>>>being god.
>>>4. Do you know of anyone, or have you yourself, been caught and prosecuted
>>>for dealing/selling/having pirate software? What happened to them?
>>>I've never been caught cause I've always been cautious and always kept a low
>>>profile. In addition, I've copped a caution for tampering with phone lines
>>>so I made sure that nothing illegal was ever on my premises. However, I
>>>know of people who have had computer equipment confiscated. But pirates are
>>>usually smart, many boards who would shut down when the heat was on and
>>>resurface elsewhere in a couple of days.
>>>As long as you were "elite" there was no problem in getting your hands on
>>>their new number. Most of it was hype and not as scary as it was made out
>>>to be. One friend who ran his own "legal" board had a slap on the wrist
>>>cause they only found an unregistered copy of Xtre gold on his pc. But if
>>>only they knew!!!



The resulting piece of pirate software is often created from a beta model of the game, sometimes inexpertly or hurriedly cracked, and misses out on much of the ancillary atmospheric parts of a game.



to the dongle looking for a specific response. Ergo, without the dongle, the program wouldn't run. It wasn't a foolproof method though, and with a little application those reasonably proficient with electrical engineering could get around it in a number of ways. Programs that come on floppy disks can be protected in other ways, including using unusual sector sizes (to prevent the information on the master floppy being copied to a normal floppy disk), using hidden files, or even physically creating a hole in the floppy disk which forces bad sectors to appear on the disk. Then there were the low-tech solutions to piracy like the good old code

wheels. The simplest (and often the best) way, however, was often just making a hefty manual indispensable to the game. As with the code wheel, at the start of the game the player was required to enter something which could only be found on the pages of the manual (i.e. 'What's the second word on the 42nd page of the manual?', and so on). All these methods have their virtues, but none are foolproof, anyone who really wants to will still be able

to get at and copy the programs on the disks - it just depends on how dedicated the pirates are.

When CDs became the norm for applications and games, the rules were changed for pirates. The information contained on the CD could still be copied, but obviously it was a different question over where the information was stored, and when CD-recorders were retailing for around \$5000, for most this was out of the question. Hence programs like FakeCD, CD Simulator, Virtual CD and others came into play. They are all completely legal programs (in much the same way

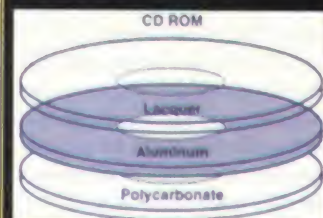
that owning a bong is legal), but there are few uses for these programs that don't include illegal activities - you could use your bong as a vase, for instance, but that'd be pretty pointless. They all, in one way or another, fool your PC into thinking that a section of your hard drive is actually a CD-Rom, hence you can store and use a copy of a CD game on your hard drive as a CD. It's also possible to uniquely mark the physical glass master CD, so that when the programs try to access the CD they look for the 'defect' and if it isn't there, it won't run. This is often an expensive solution though, because it requires a special CD burner. Regardless, with most games and applications using the CD-Rom format, cracks such as 'CD-Rips' have become prevalent. A CD-Rip is where a program is cracked so that it no longer requires a CD to be used at all. The advantages of using CD-Roms in the first place is that they can store a large amount of information, including FMV sequences, cut-scenes online manuals, soundtracks, and so on. Even though modems have become much faster, and hard drives much larger, a 500 meg game is still pretty damn big. So most CD-Rips leave out cut scenes and FMV, in fact they usually only contain the bare minimum of files needed to run the application. The resulting piece of pirate software is often created from a beta model of the game, sometimes inexpertly or hurriedly cracked, and misses out on much of the ancillary atmospheric parts of a game. Of the people involved in the pirate community, many say that they believe CD-Rips and the like have actually helped to increase software sales. Because the pirate copies are often dodgy and incomplete, the recipients will be encouraged to purchase the boxed version if they like the pirate version - sort of a shareware type scenario where you try before you buy, just that the trial is unauthorised and not really welcomed by the developers. There is an inkling of merit in this opinion, but it has to be very doubtful whether pirate software has actually increased legitimate sales. Perhaps because of the vagaries of the pirating process some pirate software is discarded in favour of a legal version, but aren't these people who would have been likely to buy the program anyway?

Getting the data around

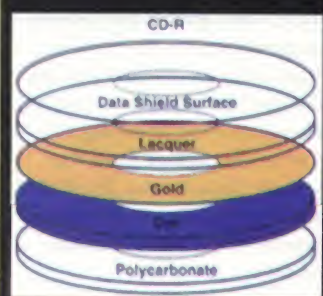
With CD-Writers becoming much more affordable, at around \$1000 each, the playing field is changing once again. HD space isn't a such a consideration anymore, because once someone has a CD Burner all that's required is a little time and a CD-R for a complete copy of a game. One of the major reasons given for the failure of the Amiga was the ease with

CD-Rs and CD-ROMs - what's the difference?

CD-ROM's and CD-R (CD-Record) are two very different formats. CD-ROM's can be mass produced inexpensively with large machines specifically designed for the task that can pump out copies every 3 seconds or so. CD-R's however, are tailored for smaller scale productions, and made from different materials. CD-ROM disks comprise three layers, a top layer of lacquer for protection, Aluminium in the middle for reflection, and a bottom layer of Polycarbonate, which is where the 'pits' (the holes punched by the laser) and 'lands' (the spaces between the pits) are stamped.



CD-R's are another matter entirely. Often called 'gold disks' (because they're usually gold coloured) they comprise 5 layers of material. The bottom layer is polycarbonate, though contrary to CD-ROM's this layer serves only as a base. A layer of dye is placed on top of the polycarbonate, which is what the laser writer etches the data onto. On top of this is a layer of gold, so as to ensure the highest degree of reflexivity, with another layer of lacquer on top of that for protection, and with some brands of CD-R's there's also another data protection layer on top of the lacquer.



5. How can so many web sites, irc channels, ftp sites, and so on operate so openly? I was amazed at how many there were, and how open it was.
>>>Obviously, they weren't the best sites, with the newest stuff and all that.
>>>- I guess the serious ones are much more underground, huh?
>>>
>>>The stuff you see on the internet are still small time. You haven't seen anything really, the stuff on ftp sites are usually stuff that's been around for a while and re-jurgitated. Piracy is much much different these days. It's on a much larger scale. Even I find it a little scary and that's scary.
>>>
>>>6. Has the scene changed as the internet has become more commercial and popular?
>>>
>>>The piracy scene has redeveloped since the internet hit the big time. A lot of pirate boards have closed shop due to the net's popularity but that's not to say piracy has hit a brick wall. On the contrary it's now bigger and badger than ever. You just have to know where to find it.
>>>
>>>7. How has the increasing size of games changed things? i.e. is downloading a 200meg cd-rip at 28.8 commonplace? Or have things like cd-r's become much more popular? How are they distributed though? What about jar/zip drives
>>>are they likely to have/have they had much of an impact?
>>>
>>>If you have a fast link fair enough, I guess it's ok to download a 200 meg cd-rip but the truth is the real pirates have no need for this. Since the introduction of CDRs piracy has boomed and it's so easy to get CDs with the multiple games and applications. Music is another big thing for pirates and that's what the internet is really used for.
>>>
>>>8. Any interesting related stories you want to share? (optional, obviously)
>>>
>>>Even though piracy is a serious problem within the software industry there are many different views that are shared amongst computer junkies. Some argue that high software prices cause piracy and others say piracy helps software sales through the use of trialing a program that you would never have bought in the first place. Theory is if you like the product you go buy it, for the manual, technical support and so on.
>>>
>>>To me though I don't dwell on it much these days. The market is so oversaturated with so much software that it's hard to keep up and have a social life. In more selective these days and it's much easier to just a shareware product which does the task you want and grab a crack or serial number for it. Guess I'm just getting older. Hope I helped you out, now let me get back to Diablo 2.

So the companies make their money, the pirates get their free stuff, and you get screwed.



which games could be copied and pirated - copying from floppy to floppy was often a simple task. What's going to happen when CD Burners become even cheaper, as they are destined to be? Is the same scenario going to repeat itself again? Nowadays, of course the internet makes long distance transference of files much easier. In the old days, I'm told, calling overseas BBS's was a hazardous task, using a modem created specifically for the Australian phone system trying to dial in to an American exchange for example often resulted in drop outs, and screwed up data transfers. There were modems tailored to international dialling though which were favourites of the wares couriers (and may still be) - the USR 'Courier' was a popular model, because of its abilities and of course its name - which was no coincidence, if you believe the pirates.

But the rules are changing once again. Though it still may prove to

read CD-R's at all, because of their larger physical size (compared to CD-Rom's). Thus if (or when) games and applications start to appear on DVD's it might become much harder for pirates to traffic in software, for a few reasons. Firstly, as with when CD-Rom recorders were new, DVD recorders will be very expensive and out of the reach of most people, at least for a year or two. The alternative is to copy the game from DVD to HD, and then write it onto a CD-Rom. However, one of the major advantages of DVD is the amount of data that the disks will store - around 13 times the amount a standard CD, which of course makes transferring data from a DVD disk to a CD-R a problem. There are workarounds to these and other problems - the introduction of DVD drives as the standard format for applications and games won't stop piracy; the situation can be likened to the intro-

duction of CD-Rom drives, eventually pirates got around the problems created by the 'new' medium.

Who is the victim?

No matter what the format or

what it is being pirated; games, applications, movies stored on DVD disks, or anything else, there will always be piracy. Society, especially those within the computer community, have often treated pirates with respect and awe (and not uncommonly a little fear), seeing them not as criminals but as young scamps - being a 'cracker' or trafficking in pirated applications and software is cool to many people. However, forget the rationalisations about the ethos of hacking and cracking, forget the justification that warez are an enhanced form of shareware, in the end it costs the consumer - you. While giant corporations like Microsoft and the like do undoubtedly make squillions of dollars, they also lose a hell of a lot of revenue to pirates. So do games companies, and while there are giants within the games industry, a healthy percentage of the great games have come from smaller organisations who are less financially secure. Companies are there to make money - we live in the age of capitalism, and the money they lose from pirate copies of their product they recoup from you, the less profits they make, the higher the price they charge for their software. So the companies make their money, the pirates get their free stuff, and you get screwed. Yup,

pirates are pretty damn cool indeed.

[footnotes]
(1) source: SPA figures May 1997.
<http://www.spa.org/privacy/release/96pir.htm>
(2) A small text file included with the pirate software used to identify those who cracked the game or brought it into the country. Akin to graffiti artists 'tagging' a wall with their signature

Really? There's a law against that?

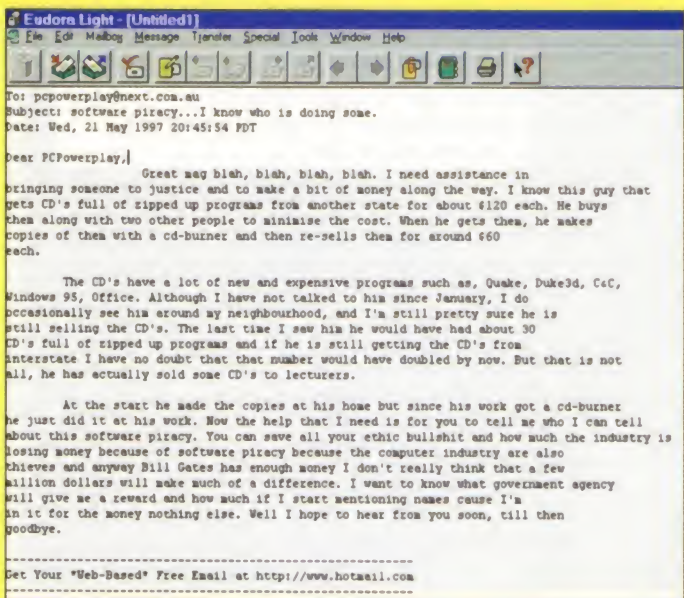
Yup, the Government and those lawyer types aren't stuck in the dark ages, they know all about software piracy, and they've even made a law to stop it! Numerous sections of the voluminous Copyright act (1968) deal with computer software piracy in one way or another. The first, from section 132 of the act deals with the copying and distribution of pirate software, and the second (section 133a) is concerned with the advertising of illegal copies of software for sale or trade.

Section 132 reads (in part):

1. A person shall not, at a time when copyright subsists in a work :
 - (a) Make an article for sale or hire;
 - (b) Sell, or let for hire or by way of trade offer or expose for sale or hire an article
 - (c) import an article into Australia for the purpose of:
 - (i) Selling, letting for hire, or by way of trade offering or exposing for sale or hire the article;
 - (ii) Distributing the article for the purpose of trade, or for any other purpose to an extent that will affect prejudicially the owner of the copyright in the work; or [...]
- (5A) For the purposes of this section, a transmission by a person of a computer program that is received and recorded so as to result in the creation of an infringing copy of the computer program shall be deemed to be a distribution by the person of that infringing copy.

Section 133a - 'Advertisement for supply of infringing copies of computer programs' 133a.

- (1) Where:
 - (a) a person, by any means, publishes, or causes to be published, in Australia, an advertisement for the supply in Australia (whether from within or outside Australia) of a copy of a computer program; and
 - (b) the person knows, or ought reasonably to know, that the copy is, or will be, an infringing copy; the person is guilty of an offence punishable upon conviction by :
 - (c) where it is the first conviction of the person of an offence against this subsection (including this subsection as in force before the commencement of section 17 of the copyright amendment act 1986):
 - (i) If the person is a natural person - a fine not exceeding \$1500; or
 - (ii) if the person is a body corporate - a fine not exceeding \$7500; and
 - (d) In any other case -
 - (i) if the person is a natural person - a fine not exceeding \$1500 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding 6 months, or both; or
 - (ii) if the person is a body corporate - a fine not exceeding \$15000



>q>a SETUP with Ashton Mills

PCI? IRQ? DMA? WTF?

Setup
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick st.
Redfern
NSW 2016
setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

WHEN YOU WRITE, REMEMBER TO INCLUDE AS MUCH PERTINENT INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE. SEND YOUR CONFIG.SYS AND AUTOEXEC.BAT AND ANY ASSOCIATED *.INI FILES FOR WINDOWS THAT MIGHT TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM. GIVE ME AS DETAILED AN EXPLANATION AS YOU CAN AND BE SURE TO INCLUDE AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE ABOUT YOUR PC. FEEL FREE TO EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS OR, IF YOU WANT TO SNAIL MAIL, PLEASE REMEMBER TO WRITE CLEARLY OR BETTER STILL, PRINT YOUR LETTERS. PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO THE VOLUME OF MESSAGES WE RECEIVE, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE A RESPONSE TO YOUR QUERIES.

IT'S IN THE VIDEO

>q I've got a Trident 9400cx which was the original with my P60 when I purchased it 2.5 years ago. The card supports both modes (interlaced and non) and I've checked the jumpers on

the card with the manual yet games such as Red Alert and Rebel Assault 2 give me interlaced only. I have upgraded the memory of the card to 2Mb max. What can I do? Those lines are so annoying!!!

George
Internet

>a George, your dedication to experiencing the ultimate enjoyment from your games is most admirable, but no amount of tinkering will get those video sequences to run in non-interlaced mode. In fact interlacing in terms of your video card is quite different to the interlacing in the video sequences you're experiencing with your games (which I assume is what you're talking about). Game companies often save disk space (or CD space, as it were) by storing motion video in an 'interlaced' format. The lines are annoying, but the size of the video file is drastically reduced.

SECTOR SIZES SUCK

>q Howdy, I've got a rather annoying problem that I hoped you could help me out with. I own a 486 dx2/66 with 16Mb RAM and a 540 Mb hard drive (don't laugh, I already know it sucks, I just can't afford to upgrade.) Anyway, I was in DOS the other day and realising that I only had 40 Mb left I wondered

where all my memory had gone. So I dir/s C: drive to see where all the space had gone and because I had 4DOS on, found that there was over 100Mb more space allocated than was used. This is because my parents have a large number of gif and sound files because they have a web site. I then found that the minimum allocation size for files was approx 16k. This causes me distress because we already have Microsoft Office and most other files installed on zip disks, but with the speed of my computer it's just not worth running games from zip drive. Is there any way that I can lower the minimum memory allocation size on my computer? (preferably without formatting the drive.) P.S I love the black harddrive. Muchos Gracias,

Sky
Internet

>a Yes, I like my black case too :-). You can indeed change the minimum allocation size without losing data, but you'll need commercial software to do it — Partition Magic 3. It's an essential utility for anyone wishing to use multiple operating systems or squeeze more space from their drives. In your case you can reduce the amount of slack space by splitting that drive into two or more partitions. By creating smaller

partitions, each partition will use a smaller cluster size thereby making better use of the available space. Partition Magic can also create and modify partitions without destroying data. Alternatively you can use the FAT32 option of Windows 95B (OSR2) if you're running Windows 95 and don't mind upgrading. FAT32 makes better use of cluster sizes but at the cost of incompatibility with any other operating systems AND you will need to reformat your drive. Hence, if you can afford to purchase it, Partition Magic 3 is your best bet.

BEEF IS GOOD

>q I was recently told about beefing up a CPU's speed rating to increase the performance of my PC. Apparently, you can change the jumpers to force the CPU to operate at a greater speed, from my P-133 to a P-166. I was wondering how safe this procedure is, what's the chance of it burning out and if it'll cause more errors to occur in my system (as I already experience lots of crashes and fatal errors in my programs for some unknown reason). I also recently connected to the Internet, but as I live in the country, I'm paying a truck load to gain access (\$5 per hour, overtime), I was wondering if you knew of a

MS-DOS Prompt - 4DOS

File Name	Size	File Name	Size
04-97	4:13	1,178	AUTOEXEC.003
12-97	1:54	1,149	AUTOEXEC.BAK
17-97	15:32	339	AUTOEXEC.BAT
28-97	5:16	501	AUTOEXEC.DOS
06-97	16:43	690	autoexec.nu
25-97	0:47	617	C.S
04-96	11:11	93,812	COMMAND.COM
30-93	6:20	54,619	COMMAND.DOS
25-97	0:47	617	CONFIG.BAK
28-97	5:15	180	CONFIG.DOS
17-97	15:29	2	CONFIG.SYS
04-96	5:00	31,948	GUEST.EXE
06-97	16:52	20,992	IMAGE.DAT
04-97	0:11	23	MSDOS.BAK
04-97	3:17	2,493	NETLOG.TXT
1-16-94	17:47	5,342	NNANSI.COM
01-93	2:04	28,959	PKZIP.EXE
4-29-93	19:26	81	PKZIP.CFG
01-93	2:04	42,552	PKZIP.EXE
04-97	5:34	522	SCANDISK.LOG
28-97	6:05	0	SQL.LOG

398,492 bytes in 29 files and 41 dirs 1,114,112 bytes allocated
407,961,600 bytes free

DANG THEM CLUSTER SIZES! LOOK AT THAT, 400K TAKES UP 1.1 MEG! (SEE LETTER "SECTOR SIZES SUCK")

c:\>

provider which I could go through (for the cost of a local call, not STD) which will provide me with unlimited access to the Internet. I'm presently connected to 'Access One', and pay \$42 per month, which gives 7 hours a week, then it's \$5 per hour overtime. Please help! I don't know how long my pocket can hold out.

Luke
Hamilton, Vic

>a Hey Luke, Overclocking and bus speed are two wonderful words when it comes to performance on your PC. I've received a few emails asking about the how overclocking works and how bus speed affects performance so I might as well go a little in-depth here. Basically, the bus speed we're talking about here is the speed of the bus that connects the CPU and your main memory (the system bus) — devices such as video cards run off a different bus using a different speed — PCI runs at 33MHz, ISA at 8MHz and so on. The speed of your system bus also directly affects how fast your CPU runs — all CPUs run at a 'multiplier' of the bus speed. The standard for motherboards these days is 66MHz, although newer motherboards are capable of 60, 75 and sometimes 83 as well.

Ever wondered why CPUs are classed as, say, P100, P133, P200 and so on? It's all to do with the bus speed and the multiplier — a CPU running at 100MHz uses a multiplier of 1.5, 133MHz uses a multiplier of 2 and a 200MHz CPU uses a multiplier of 3. If you did your maths quickly you'd find that this means a P200 is in fact a P198 ($66 * 3$). Similarly, a P133 is actually running at 132MHz ($66 * 2$). Different CPU speeds require different bus speeds, a P120 for example uses a bus speed of 60MHz (not 66) with a multiplier of 2 ($60 * 2 = 120$).

Here's where overclocking steps in. What if you run your CPU at a higher speed than it's designed for, such as running a P120 as a P133? That's overclocking. To overclock a P120 to a P133, you'd simply up the bus speed

from 60 to 66. Alternatively, you could change the multiplier from 2 to 2.5 and get a P150 ($60 * 2.5$). Or, you could change both multiplier AND bus speed. The performance benefits are twofold — a faster CPU has obvious benefits. A faster bus speed has to be seen to be believed. Memory access, video output, everything runs MUCH faster. So why aren't higher bus speeds used as standard? The PC industry isn't willing to foot the bill, that's why.

Higher bus speeds WILL mean a shorter lifespan for your peripherals, and some peripherals (including RAM) can't properly handle higher bus speeds and so systems can become highly unstable very quickly. CPU wise, overclocking too far past a CPU's original limit will simply fry it.

Note, you can only change these settings if your motherboard supports it, and this is really only common with newer motherboards. Also, many motherboard manufacturers won't list the jumper settings in the manual, as they don't want to be getting support calls from consumers who've managed to cook their PCs.

Overall, it's a great performance tweak for the speed freak, but it's a risky business, and as such not recommended (unless you happen to sweat money and can risk your precious hardware).

As for country based ISPs, there aren't many that setup nodes in less population dense places, so your choices are automatically limited. On top of this, most of them will charge you the Earth because of the fact that these are remote nodes. Shop around is the only recommendation I can offer!

THE MMX DIFFERENCE

>q I'm thinking of upgrading my existing Pentium 133MHz CPU to a faster CPU. Is the Pentium 200 MMX value for money over a normal Pentium 200 chip or would I be saving money at the cost of speed if I bought the latter chip.

PS. I would also be including a Diamond Monster 3D card in the system.



IF YOUR SOUND DRIVERS AREN'T LISTED HERE, GET A BETTER SOUND CARD. (SEE LETTER "WIRING FOR SOUND")

Scott Morrison
Internet

>a Yes and no. MMX, as you're probably aware, is a collection of hard coded instructions to speed up audio and video functions. To take advantage of MMX, software has to support it. Independent tests have also shown that even programs that DO support MMX aren't greatly accelerated, so it's not (as yet) a technology you absolutely need to have. On the other side of the coin, however, is that the P200 MMX comes with twice the L1 cache (Level 1 cache, the internal cache) of a standard P200 — 32k over 16k. Although it sounds small, this WILL make a difference to everything your CPU does. As such, a P200 MMX does outperform a P200 even with non MMX capable software (not by a large amount, but a noticeable difference). Really, it comes down to how much you want to spend and if you want to invest in MMX for the future. If you're going to be using a 3D card in your machine, MMX will have less of

an impact. A 3D card does just about ALL the work when it comes to games and it does it 1000 times better than any meagre acceleration you might get with MMX. Try playing a 3DFX game that comes in both MMX and non-MMX versions, you won't notice any difference at all. If you were outputting to a standard 2D card, MMX will have a slight performance improvement, but on 3D cards it doesn't do jack (well, it might help audio, but most soundcards these days do all mixing onboard anyway!).

WIRING FOR SOUND

>q I recently upgraded my sound card from a AWE32 to a AWE64 I did the installation myself installed all the drivers but I didn't remove the AWE32 drivers first, I'm not sure if this matters but as I boot into Windows (before the network username and password screen) I get the following error "Sound Blaster error. A system device is not working because it requires Sound Blaster wave version 4.33" can you tell me whether this is the fact that I didn't remove

the old AWE32 or is it something else, and also how to fix it?
P.S. I have attached a screen shot of the error box.
Thanks,
David
Internet

>a Firstly thanks for attaching the screen capture, very helpful! Secondly, yes your problem does exist because you didn't first remove the AWE32. Although such a simple upgrade procedure makes perfect sense to us (i.e., we can't see any possible problems arising) computers are incredibly fussy. Getting out of it is exactly the same procedure you should follow to upgrade in the first place. Even if the sound card is just a newer version of the one you already have, made by the same manufacturer, that doesn't guarantee any similarity at all. Thus, the first step is to uninstall the sound card drivers via the Add/Remove feature in Control Panel. Your Creative drivers SHOULD be listed there and SHOULD uninstall. But then again, nothing ever works the way you want it to so if that fails open up System, click on Device Manager and then Sound and Video Controllers. Click on the AWE32 and click Remove. Once this is done, shut down and then remove the sound card before you reboot (otherwise Windows will reboot, find your card and then proceed to install the drivers, even though you don't want it to). Reboot once with no sound card in the machine, and then shutdown Windows again, this should hopefully ensure that Windows realises you have NO sound devices in your system. Then, install the AWE64, reboot and follow any instructions for installing the AWE64 drivers. There's no doubt you should be using the AWE64 drivers over the AWE32 drivers, even if they are similar due to similar hardware, but you should always first completely remove any device before replacing it by removing the drivers and the hardware.

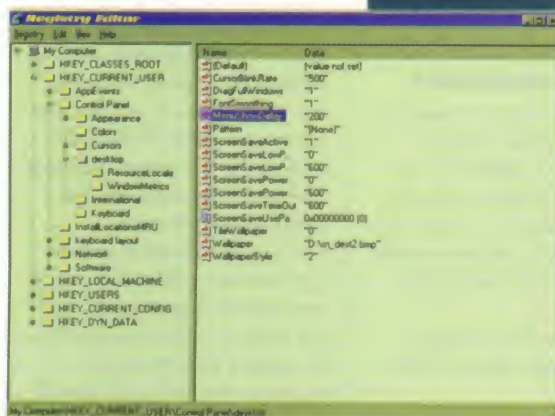
DIFFERENCE IN CACHE?

>q Firstly I'd like to say what a top mag. I've been getting it since the first edition came out. Keep up the good work. Could you tell me in order what would be the most important things to upgrade on my computer to beef it up somewhat.

I have a dinosaur old Pentium 100 with 40 meg of RAM, 6 speed cd, 16 pnp sound card, 1.2 gig hard drive and a 1 meg graphics card. Also what is the difference between 512k and 256k pipeline burst cache. Would it be better to go 512k. At the moment mine is 256k. How do you go about changing to 512k? I would be extremely grateful if you could please answer these question for me.
Thank you.

PAUL
Internet

>a With your system I'd first upgrade to a newer video card with at least 2M memory onboard and, for games specifically, get a 3D card :-). After that you should look at upgrading your CPU, you've certainly got enough RAM to handle software for a while yet. The difference between 512k and 256k is, oh, around 256k! Yes it would be better to upgrade, the 256k cache you have is known as the L2 cache (Level 2, or secondary cache) and it's where your CPU stores data while it does what CPUs do. The more space it has to use, the more data it can store. Certain operations will take longer to perform if there isn't enough space available. Upgrading isn't that easy. Most motherboards come with 256k or 512k fixed — it can't be changed. Certainly this is the case with 512k motherboards, as 99% of motherboards can't use more than 512k. 256k motherboards can upgrade to 512k assuming there is a 'cache slot' to do so. Your best bet would be to take the machine back the place you bought it from and ask them if the motherboard can be upgraded. Alternatively, and as another way of improving the performance of your machine, you can upgrade to a high quality motherboard with 512k onboard.



Random Access

Welcome to Random Access, a column dedicated to interesting, useful and informative tips about anything and everything to do with your PC. Be it hardware, software, DOS or Windows you'll find tips and tricks listed here every month. If you have some tips of your own you'd like to share with other gamers such as yourself feel free to send your tip into Setup and, if we publish it, we'll be sure to credit and print your name.

DO YOUR BIOS

Eh? Wassat? Not more of that annoying BIOS stuff that always gets in the way? Ah, now this is why you should read on.

If you think your AMI, Award, Phoenix and whatever else out there BIOS is rather fiddly to use, not very helpful and doesn't do a good job of managing your system, surf to <http://www.mrbios.com> and read all about Mr.BIOS. Microid Research have developed what is arguably the best BIOS for PCs, full stop.

Why would you want to change BIOSes? Simple — Mr.BIOS is very easy to use, has an in-depth manual explaining what everything does and, best of all, the Microid Research dudes OPTIMISE the BIOS for MAXIMUM performance. Generally, Mr.BIOS will take advantage of all the features of your chipset to give you the best performance, and let you do some tweaking yourself by giving you access to options you wouldn't normally see. On top of this it comes with intelligent setup options — you can reboot directly into the BIOS (no holding down DEL when you reboot), boot to a menu that lets you choose a floppy or the hard drive (no need to go into the BIOS, change your bootup options, save and reboot again — just to boot a floppy from a: or quick reset (standard CTRL-ALT-DELETE). It also allows you to boot SCSI ahead of IDE, tailor all IRQs for PCI/PNP support and easily set your memory refresh rates. It also offers one more feature that'll impress your socks right off: RAID. But more about that next month.

SPEEDY GONZALES!

When your start menu becomes huge and cluttered, navigating to your desired application can be a pain. One solution is to delete all the crap you've got in your Start menu by clicking on Start -> Settings -> Taskbar and then clicking Advanced. Go through the tree and get rid of everything that doesn't absolutely have to be in there.

The other solution is to speed up how quickly your submenus appear as you navigate. Do it thus:

Get into your registry (type REGEDIT) and search on the key HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Control Panel\Desktop and set the value MenuShowDelay to 200. The smaller the value, the faster submenus will display. Now, isn't that better?

A QUICKIE FOR DOS

The humble 1.44 floppy is still a widely used transfer mechanism, despite the prevalence of removable media such as ZIP disks and the ease of use the Internet provides for transferring files. Problem is, floppies have a habit of reporting 'Sector not found' right when you're trying to decompress disk 129 out of 130 disks, causing you to curse and headbutt a nearby solid substance.

You can somewhat guarantee that your information at least has a chance to read correctly by typing the following in a DOS prompt right before you use the COPY or XCOPY command:

verify on

Simple eh? Now whenever DOS writes to a disk, be it your hard drive or floppy, it'll read back what it wrote to make sure it actually got written in the first place. Now you just have to make sure your disks don't get damaged in transit or stray past certain magnetic sources (read: speakers. That's right, it's NOT a good idea to place your floppies on speakers).

**IF MENU SHOW DELAY
DOESN'T EXIST, ADD IT.**

Games aren't everything.

Really truly.

Hardware is important too. And sexy.
And essential if you want to play games.

Better hardware = better games

At PC PowerPlay we take our hardware seriously. Our benchtests and new product reviews are regarded as the best in the industry. When PC PowerPlay looks at new hardware it's from a gamer's perspective. It may be new and fast and expensive and sexy - it may even be black, but if it doesn't enhance games it's straight into the boring bin.

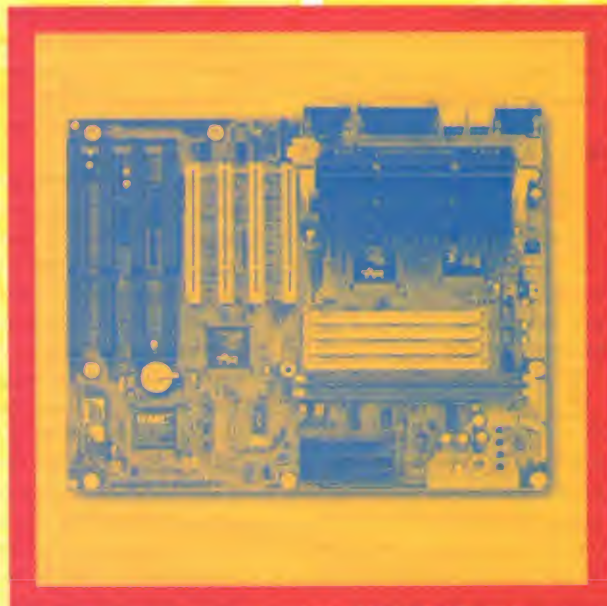
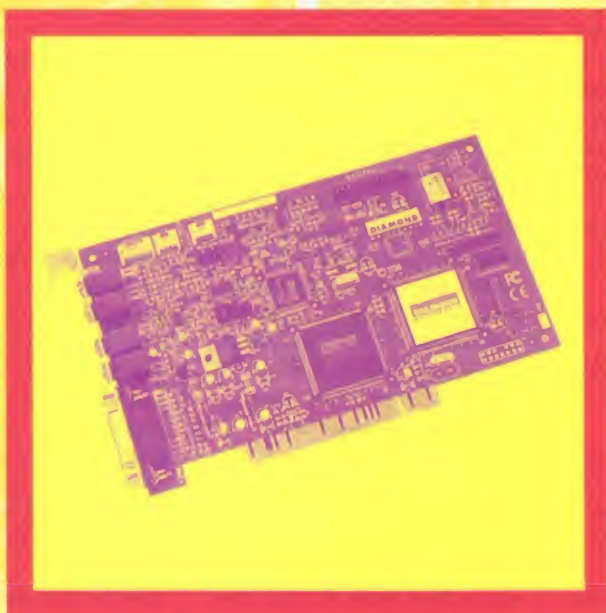
It's important that you know what's hot in hardware, so, we've made the

PC POWERPLAY **HOT HARDWARE GUIDE**

This invaluable tome has everything you'll ever need to know about what goes on inside your PC. The many 'Beginner's Guides' cover the essentials - like changing your motherboard to setting up a network at home. We test and rate all the new gear - like video cards, motherboards, sound cards and joysticks, and include the most comprehensive comparison you'll ever find on 3D accelerator cards.

The **PC POWERPLAY HOT HARDWARE GUIDE**. You need it.

Available mid-October.



? * ORACLE

IN THE DAYS BEFORE ORACLE, PEOPLE SOLVED THEIR OWN PROBLEMS

Greetings and salutations oh thirsty ones. Come, gather round the Oracle and hear stories from far lands. Tell me your problems and I shall consult the cosmos itself for your answers. Sit round and sing of my greatness!

Random Oracle info:

He's currently solving *Relentless 2* in preparation for your questions, and he can't wait for the release of "The Curse of Monkey Island", even though there's bound to be 1000's of questions about it.

ORACLE

PC POWERPLAY

78 RENWICK ST,

REDFERN

NSW 2016

ORACLE@PCPOWERPLAY.NEXT.COM.AU

RED ALERT

? I have already written to you concerning C&C Red Alert and I am still stuck. Would you please give me some cheats for this game before I go mad?!

**TIM REYNOLDS
GRIFFITH, NSW**

* Well Tim, there aren't any cheat codes in Red Alert. However, you can edit the rules.ini in Wordpad and modify the values. The values in the rules.ini file will override the built in values in Red Alert. Things you can modify are computer AI, how the various weapons work and much, much more. Just read through it and make the game easier as you need be!

GABRIEL KNIGHT 2

? Please Help me! I am going insane over Gabriel Knight 2 - The Beast Within. I have read somewhere that you get the matches from the great room of the hunting lodge in chapter 5, or near the fireplace. Where are they!!

**JAIRUS HENDRAWAN
BLACKTOWN, NSW**

* Ok Jairus, here's what you need to do. We'll start from Dorn's Kennel. (Buchenau). Knock on the door, hand him the cash. Talk to him, ask about

all topics. Click on the "down" exit, and click on the last cage on the right. Click on the straw in the lower right portion of the cage view. Use the wurst on the tiger. Now click on the tags that are where you just checked in the straw. Go to the hunt club. Go out to the hallway.

Knock on the second door from the front on the left side of the hall. Talk to von Ragner. Go through all dialogue topics. Click on 3rd door from front on right side of the hall. Open the wardrobe thing, and click on the rope (black rope). Click on the "down" exit, then click on the window. In the window closeup, sweep the cursor until the cursor actually reads "down." Click then to look down. Click on the ledge. Click the rope on the ledge. Click the left pointing arrow to go to the middle window.

Click on the window to go into von Zell's room. Take the "right" exit, click on the appointment book. See that piece of paper behind the regular pages on the right? Click on it. Click on the letter in the closeup. Go into the bathroom (the open passage on the right). Click on the bathroom rug for a closeup, then click on the edge of the footprint on the upper left side of the rug, then click on the revealed footprint. Exit the bathroom, click on the "left" exit (not the door) and click on the window to exit.

Click right, then click on the rightmost window to go back in. Exit back to the hall, then choose the "down" exit to go to the Great Room. Open the wardrobe thing and get the lantern. Talk to Hennemann. Run through all dialogue choices. Go back upstairs and click on the door closest to the bottom of the screen on the left to go into Klingmann's room. Click the wolf tags on him. Go back downstairs, click on the fireplace. Click on the matchbook you see on the fireplace mantle.

LANDS OF LORE

? I need some help in a game called Lands of Lore, the throne of chaos. The problem



is I have found the draracle, but don't know what offering to give it. Likewise, I don't know where the offering is.

**DYLAN GOMER
ADELAIDE, S.A.**

* Ok Dylan, the draracle actually wants the silver goblet or the jewelled dagger. Before entering the cave, walk into the alcove on the left and place the "trinket" in the golden chest. The Draracle will give you a riddle scroll which lists the ingredients for the elixir which will cure King Richard. He also tells you that the elixir must be mixed in a tower. Loro stays with the Draracle.

When you exit the Draracle's Lair you end up on level 2.

UFO ENEMY UNKNOWN

? Are there any cheats for the game UFO Enemy Unknown?

**CLIVE LEONG
SYDNEY, NSW**

* Short and to the point Clive. Do I know any cheats? Maybe. There are patches that will give you a lot of money, but instead of putting them on the Cover CD, I've decided you should sweat for it. Here's some tips on making money, finding an alien base, and keeping expenses down.

Finding an alien base:

XCOM agents have a chance of finding an alien base for you, but chances are pretty slim. So do not rely on that. Watch for high alien activity (check the graphs) yet no interception: there's probably a base in the area. Send something slow like a Skyraanger to patrol the area. An empty Skyraanger has excellent range and therefore is perfect in spotting alien bases. Watch UFOs, esp. where they

land. If you see a "Supply Ship", do NOT attack it. Trail it and follow it to their base. After it lands, patrol nearby and you'll see the base.

Hyperwave decoders can find UFOs on supply runs. Follow that will usually lead you to a base. Of course, you don't have to take out that base... Go after the supply train instead.

Three (real) ways to make money in XCOM:

Make your sponsoring countries happy — so they will increase their payments. The problem is: they don't pay much to start with, and their increase is just enough to sneeze at. Their payments may be enough to buy some ammo and stuff, but don't expect much of an increase.

Sell captured/surplus equipment

— most of your money will be made this way. Dump off all your obsolete equipment (pistols, rifles, etc) and surplus and you will get LOTS of money. You will usually end with plenty of surplus heavy plasma, and those fetch very good prices on the market. :-) Doing this also means you need less storage space (and less maintenance) and more "real" weapons on base defense (due to the 80 item limit) Keep only one item of each type for research, sell the rest. You need the money and the space for more useful stuff.

How do I cut expenses?

- Cut Maintenance — dismantle any unused facility (see 5.6)
- Build your own crafts — Skyraangers and Interceptors have a monthly rental fee, your own crafts do not. Of course, this means you have to research UFO construction and things.
- Minimize salary — A trick...

If you sack scientists and/or engineers before the end of the month, you don't have to pay their salaries. However, there's ANOTHER way to do this:

Have two bases approximately equivalent to each other, like both research (or manufacturing), about same living quarters, and scientists (or engineers). Just before end of the month (last day, last hour), transfer ALL of the scientists (engineers) to the other base, and do the same on the other base (i.e. they swap their contingent). When the end of month comes along, NEITHER side has their scientists (engineers) (they are in transit), no salary is paid. If you have like 100 scientists moving each way, you save \$60,000x100x2 = \$12 million! Clive, if you've actually read this far, you'll discover that I'm not just the Oracle that cares, I'm the Oracle that also enjoys a bit of a laugh. There is a way to cheat, and here's how.

Hopefully you have the PCPP edition that explains Hex editing. Use a sector editor (such as Norton DiskEdit) and edit LIGLOB.DAT in your saved game's directory. Overwrite the first 8 bytes with:


64 64 64 64 00 00 00 00...

You should get about 1.68 billion dollars. (In case you are wondering, 64646464h is a hexadecimal number. In decimal it is 1,684,300,900.) You can also use


FF FF FF 7F 00 00 00 00...

Which will give you about 2.1 billion dollars. (7FFFFFFFh = 2,147,484,647)

DAY OF THE TENTACLE

 Please Master Oracle, can you help me with Day of the Tentacle? I'm stuck in Laverne's time. How do I get into the Human show? Also, how do I get the fake bath off the roof in Bernards time and What do I do to get the American flag on the roof in Laverne's time?

**NATHAN DAVIES
THORNTON, NSW**

 Righty ho Nathan, these are at least some different DOTT questions, so I'll answer them.


To get the barf. Turn on the stereo and push over the speaker in the middle of the tentacles' room.

To enter the human show and win, do this. Get Ted the mummy by using the skates. Then push.


Register Ted first. Get a tag from the blue tentacle by the fireplace in the registration room. Talk to the judges to get them to attend to business. Get rid of Harold by using the fake barf in Bernard's time. Have Laverne use it with Ted. Get Oozo's laugh box from the clown in the convention hall in Bernard's time. Use the scapel to do him in. Use Bernards textbook on ed the horse where he will get to sleep. Flush the spaghetti to Laverne and use the fork from the kitchen in Bernard's time with the spaghetti on Ted's head. To get rid of the humans, Get the black cat outside? Paint the fence white so when he rubs his back he will get a white stripe. Use the Booboo-b-gone from Fred's office on the fence. Use the toy mouse from the attic in the past. Use the squeaky mattress with the other bed. Get the cat, scare the humans away and win.

To get the flag, from within the jail talk to the tentacle-guard and tell him, you feel kinda ill. In the doctors room, take the tentacle chart. Leave the room and go through the big door in the back wall. Now go to the kennel. Talk again to the guard and tell him, ya need to go to the toilet. Give the tentacle chart to haagie and swap to Bernard. Now give the following things to Laverne : fake barf, crank, fork and Booboo-B-Gone. Haogie gives her : dentures, mouse, can-opener and the spaghetti. Hoogie himself goes to Betsy's room and uses the tentacle-chart with the patterns to provide Laverne with a disguise. Go back into the jail. There, she tells the tentacle that she is not feeling so well. Arrived in the doctor's room, she goes out and jumps into the fireplace. Put the crank on the crank-box and winds down the "flag".

FATE OF ATLANTIS

 I've been stuck in "Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis for months and I've only just begun. I've spoken to Mr Costa in the Azores who wants a trade and Dr Sternheart in Tikal but I don't know what to do next. In the temple in Tikal there is a door that won't open and an animal head that needs a nose. I know you must be getting fed up with queries for this game, but I really need your help.

MITCHELL GAGE INGLE FARM, S.A.

 Hey look, another Lucasarts - Fate Of Atlantis Query. Don't worry, I won't make another contentious "State of Origin" comment. (Look closely for the pun.) The Oracle loves a Sunburnt country. No matter from what state we're from, we're all Australians, and that makes us the best kind of people in the world! BTW, I am sick of FOR questions, but C'est la vie, mine is but to give! Here is some help past where you are. (New York, Iceland, Tikali, Azores, College) NEW YORK: Take the newspaper. Find your way through the crates on the backside of the building (push crates) and use the fire escape.

(Give the paper to the stage-hand, push the right and left lever and press the button. Talk to Sophia and leave together with her for Iceland).

ICELAND: Talk to Heimdall; he tells you about Tikali and the Azores.

TIKALI: Hit the jungle rodent several times with the whip, until it runs to the snake; use the tree. Talk to Sternhart until he asks you the name of Plato's lost dialogue. Tell him that you do not know the title. Then talk to the parrot, ask him "Title?" and talk again to Sternhart. Inside the pyramid, ask Sophia to keep Sternhart occupied. Go outside, take the lamp and open it. Use the lamp to get the spiral design in the pyramid. Then use the design with the animal head, pull it and open the grave. Sternhart gets away with the disk. Take the bead and return to Iceland.

ICELAND: Use the bead in the eel's mouth; take the eel. AZORES: Let Sophia first talk to Costa. Then trade him the eel for the knowledge of the position of the lost dialogue.

COLLEGE: There are three possibilities to find the collection (changes from game to game). (Case 1) Take the gum from the desk in the library, use it with the coal chute in the furnace room. Take the wax cat figurine and melt it in the furnace. (Case 2) Get the rag in the furnace room and the arrowhead in the room with the totempole. Use the rag with the arrowhead to produce a screwdriver and open the bookcase in the library.



(Case 3) Use the jar from the refrigerator in the office with the totempole. Pull the totempole under the hole in the ceiling and climb up. Open the urn and take the key. Push the crate in the totempole-room and open the chest behind it. Talk to Sophia in the office and choose one of the three paths — team, wits, and fists. I chose Team mode, so if you want the Oracles help, so will you! (Algier, Monte Carlo)

ALGIER: Go to the shopkeeper in the back alley and take the mask. Talk to the man with the knives. Convince Sophia to volunteer for him and push her as she hesitates. You will receive a knife this way.

MONTE CARLO: Talk to several people and ask them about Trottier. Sooner or later you will meet him (a man in a brown suit). Talk to him in a very polite and humble way till he is willing to take part in the seance.

(1st possibility as Indy (most fun)) During the seance take the flashlight from the cabinet and the bedsheet. Open the fuse box and use the circuit breaker. Wear the bedsheet, the mask and the flashlight to produce a reasonable ghost. (2nd possibility as Sophia) When Indy talks to Trottier outside, take notes on what he said (they vary from game to game). After entering the room, transfer control to Sophia. Demand proof. Answer three questions as Trottier just said. Answer a random number.(may need several save-and-restores here) This solution does not require the mask. Afterwards take the sunstone.

ALGIER: Talk again to the shopkeeper and show him the sunstone. He will give you a map and a couple of camels; your first visit to the desert fails. Next you have to trade several things with the shopkeeper and with the grocer; the final goal is to get the squab-on-a-stick for the mask. Give the squab to the beggar and receive a balloon ticket. Go to the roof, enter the balloon and cut the rope with the knife.





CODE

EVER WONDERED WHY THEY MAKE CHEAT CODES?

APACHE LONGBOW

If you use **MONTY BARRYMORE** as your pilot name, makes you indestructible and gives you unlimited ammo in campaign mode.

CAPITALISM PLUS

Here are Capitalism Plus Hints and Strategies straight from the I=Magic playtesters:

- 1) Own the entire system. Be a Carnegie, don't buy imported rubber to make shoes if you can find a good farm location and grow rubber trees.
- 2) Plan your farms in conjunction with your stores and factories. You can negate your profit greatly by paying the long range transportation costs.
- 3) I don't like heart of downtown malls. The edge of the city offers MUCH cheaper building costs and the profit you turn is almost identical.
- 4). Look for a diversified company with an aggressive CEO and buy stock in it...over time, it should pay nice dividends.
- 5) Keep an eye on the stock market, especially looking for a corp. buying a large stake in a rival...it's probably a prelude to a takeover. Buy some stock in the target corp yourself. You'll not only benefit from the rising stock price as the takeover move along, but when it's complete and the two merge, you'll now own stock in the parent.
- 6) Get away from using imported products and material as soon as possible. When the supplier moves, it creates havoc with your supply lines and costs \$\$ when you're just relabelling an import because that import ain't there no more.
- 7) Beds are a great and cheap first product line to start. They have a nice margin of profit and only require a timber camp for raw materials.
- 8) When you first move a new product into a city, it'll not do well (as a rule) against the local competition for quite some time. If you lower the price, often taking a small loss on the product, you'll snag market share in a hurry and can then raise the price. The customers normally keep buying your now=pricier product.
- 9) If you can get a gold mine running, it's a profit=making machine.
- 10) Oil is a great income=producer. The problem is that you only make the big \$\$ by selling it to your competitors, who use it to make other products that compete with yours.



Extreme Assault

STREET RACER

Go to GAME OPTIONS and use these codes on the "Cup Password" option.

TRAFIK = SILVER CUP

NEJATI = GOLD CUP

DOUGAL = PLATINUM CUP

TURGAY = ADVANCE OPTIONS/SECRET LEVEL and CHARACTERS

BLOOD

Hit "t" during gameplay and type in the following codes.

nocapinmyass = God Mode

i wanna be like kevin = God Mode

capinmyass = God Mode off

eva galli = clipping on/off

goonies = full map

rate = frame rate display

idaho = All weapons and ammo

bunz = All weapons and ammo

lara croft = All weapons and unlimited ammo

hongkong = All weapons and unlimited ammo

montana = All weapons, ammo, and items

keymaster = all keys

satchel = all items

griswold = full armor

spork = 200 health

onering = toggle invisibility

mario = level skip

calgon = level skip

clarice = 100 health

mcgee = set yourself on fire

fork broussard = no weapons, 1 health, drunk mode

sterno = fade to black

jojo = drunk mode

BLOOD AND MAGIC

To use the codes, hold down the ALT key and type in the code:

FOG? WHAT FOG? = Fog of War off

BOOST = Full mana

ELMINSTER = Everything Researched

ACOLYTE = Basal Golem

FATHER = Cleric

WOLVERINE = Druid

GREMLIN = Enchanter

FATAL ATTRACTION = Fury

FLYING MONKIES = Gargoyle

RAISE DEAD = Ghoul

ALASKA = Gnome

JARETH = Goblin

CONCRETE = Stone Golem

MERV = Griffin

BODY GUARD = Guardian

MICROSQUISH = Juggernaut

MOTHER IN LAW = Harpy

SEDUCTION = Nymph

LANCELOT = Paladin

YOGI = Ranger

NEEDS FOOD BADLY = Warrior

MERLIN = Wizard

SHADOW = Wraith



Extreme Assault

SMOG = Wyrn

DEAD FLESH = Zombie

CYBERGLADIATORS

These codes will give you two extra fighters.

Highlight "Master Pain" and hit **SK**, **PP**, and **PK** to access Carnigore.

Highlight "Psychopps" and hit **PK**, **PP**, **SK**, and **PP** to access Schrapp.

DEATH RALLY

Need a little assistance in Death Rally? No problem; below are the cheat codes.

Just type these codes in during the race to activate the cheats.

DRUB = Invulnerability

DREAD = Unlimited Ammo

DRAG = Unlimited Turbo

Type these while at the menu.

DR00L = Get a Quick \$500,000

DRAW =

Get \$1,000

DROP = Drop 10 Points

DRIVE = Get 10 Points

EXTREME ASSAULT

To activate the cheat codes, type "oh dear" at the main menu. Then, during gameplay type in the following:

alt+1 = full ammo

alt+2 = weapon upgrade

alt+3 = add shield energy

alt+4 = god mode

alt+6 = end mission

alt+7 = freeze enemies

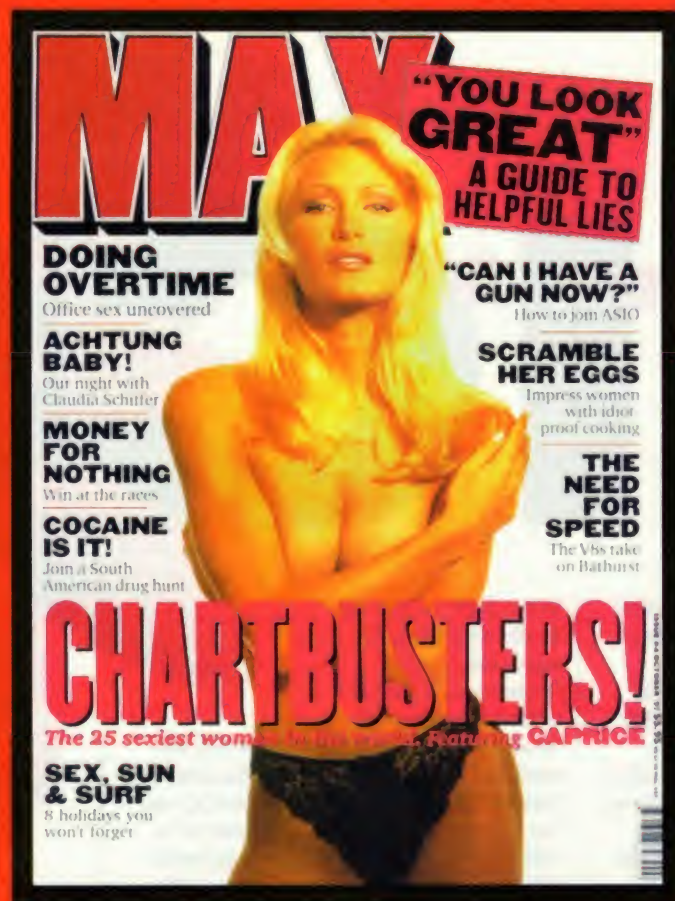
alt+8 = switch to heli mode

alt+9 = switch to tank mode

alt+0 = speed

PANDORA DIRECTIVE

Inside the first Mayan chamber (the one with the puzzle pieces laying about), use the jack-knife on the very top-most part of the ceiling. Then, use the jackknife on the picture of the struggling man (on the chamber wall) — particularly on his head (the picture has two guys grabbing the man). Once you do, you'll be taken to a secret room.



**ELLE, GILLIAN, JENNIFER,
UMA, KATE, GWYNETH, CAPRICE**

MAX

**Meet the 25 sexiest
women in the world**

A special issue of Australia's monthly mag for men. On sale now.

You Seek Me - ICQ

For the years I have been surfing the web, my friends keep asking me a recurring question - "How can I tell when my friends are online when I am?". The ensuing answer would be complex, and for the average punter too much to comprehend. That was before a brilliant piece of software called ICQ or 'I Seek You' was presented to me. ICQ relies on a series of servers inter-connected across the globe, so when you connect to the internet and inform your local server, that information is then passed onto servers around the world, and likewise to those who have specified to look out for your specific user information.

The ICQ 1-2-3

Becoming a member of the massive ICQ community is simple and starts with a small download - 1.3 Mb for Windows 3.x (Win32s required); 1.4 Mb for Win 95/NT users. The Macintosh release is imminent, and the Java version won't be long either - in both cases you can leave your e-mail address for instant notification.

Once you have downloaded and run the setup program, the Registration Wizard will guide you through the necessary steps in creating a new personality, and any last questions are answered

in the 'How To Use ICQ in 26 Seconds' at your registration's finale.

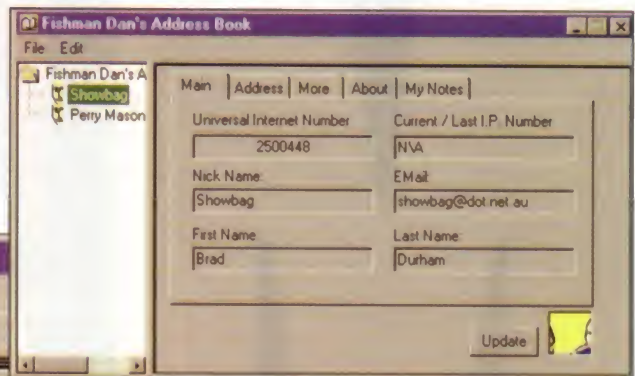
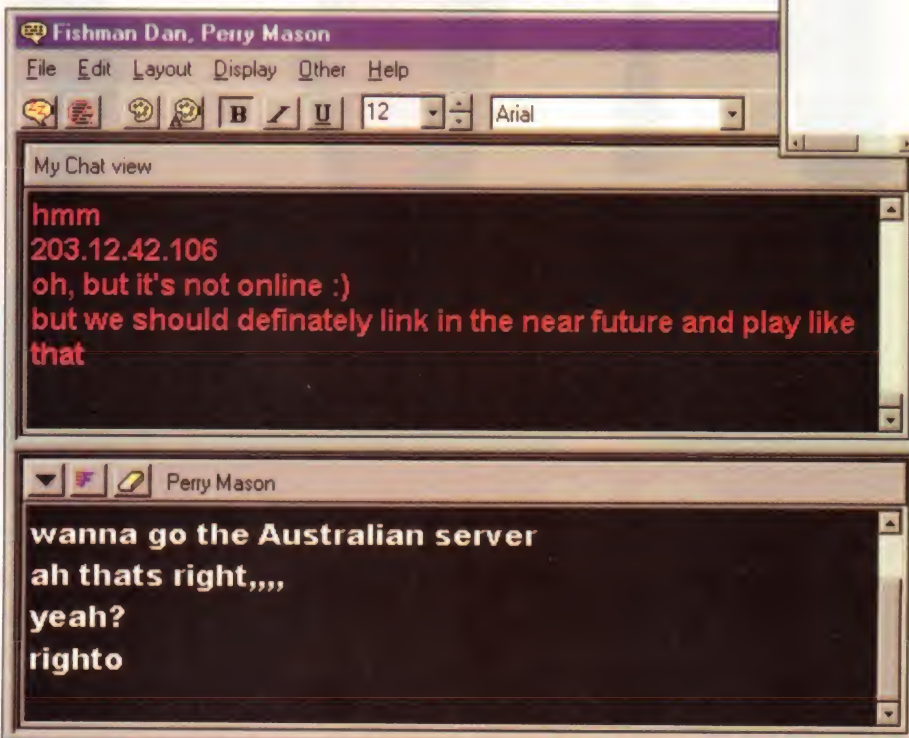
When you next connect to the internet you will be automatically registered with the ICQ network, and given your UIN - Universal Internet Number. This number is your key to ICQ, and can be used from any computer connected to ICQ if you have your UIN and your password (which you choose in the setup process). The bulk of this process can be carried out offline, with the final confirmation being completed when you next connect to the internet.

Online, But Who Can We Contact?

Adding your friends to your list is simple and can be done in one of three ways - by entering your friends email address, by using a name they registered with ICQ, or by their UIN given to them by ICQ. If they are not registered with ICQ, then you can have a polite message sent requesting they register with the network, complete with download instructions, future plans, and

an added note by the sender.

ICQ has a simple interface and rests patiently in the upper corner of your screen (it can be minimised when not in use). It displays which of your designated friends is online, offline, or in some cases whether or not a requested user has registered, but there is a lot more to it than



(above) an addressbook entry
(left) snapped during a chat with a friend

that. There are 3 menus, two at the bottom of the control panel. The first is the ICQ logo which contains the chat, file transfer and user setup options, the other being the word 'Online'. This second menu can set your current status, from openly contactable to invisible, away, or you can enter a Do Not Disturb message. You can send a message directly to any registered user with the in-house paging; if a user is online you can arrange a direct text chat, or if you have a voice modem and chat software you can use ICQ to start a conversation, and you can send files directly to a friend using ICQ's file transfer option. There is no way you can miss out when a friend connects to the ICQ network, the program will play a sound announc-

Suggested Download Sites

<http://www.icq.com>
<http://www.windows95.com>
<http://www.shareware.com>
<http://www.tucows.com> (then pick local mirror)

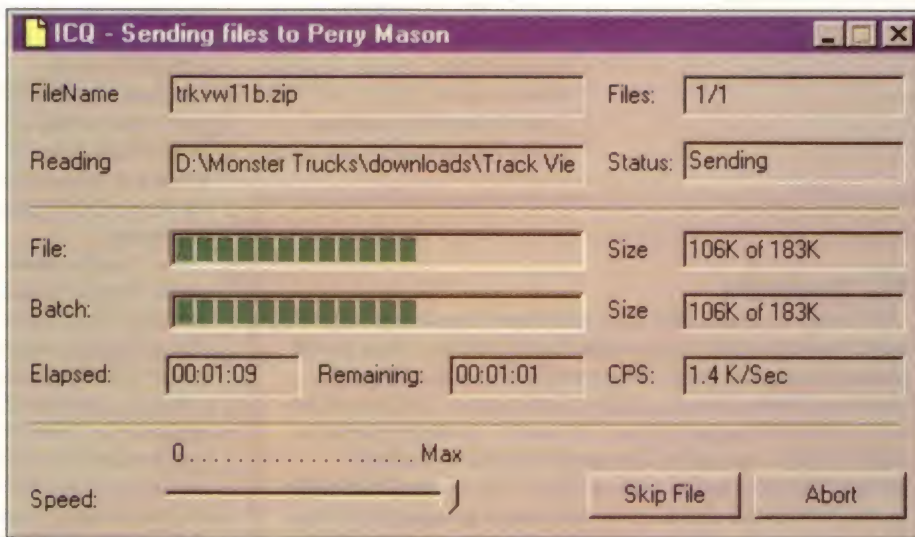
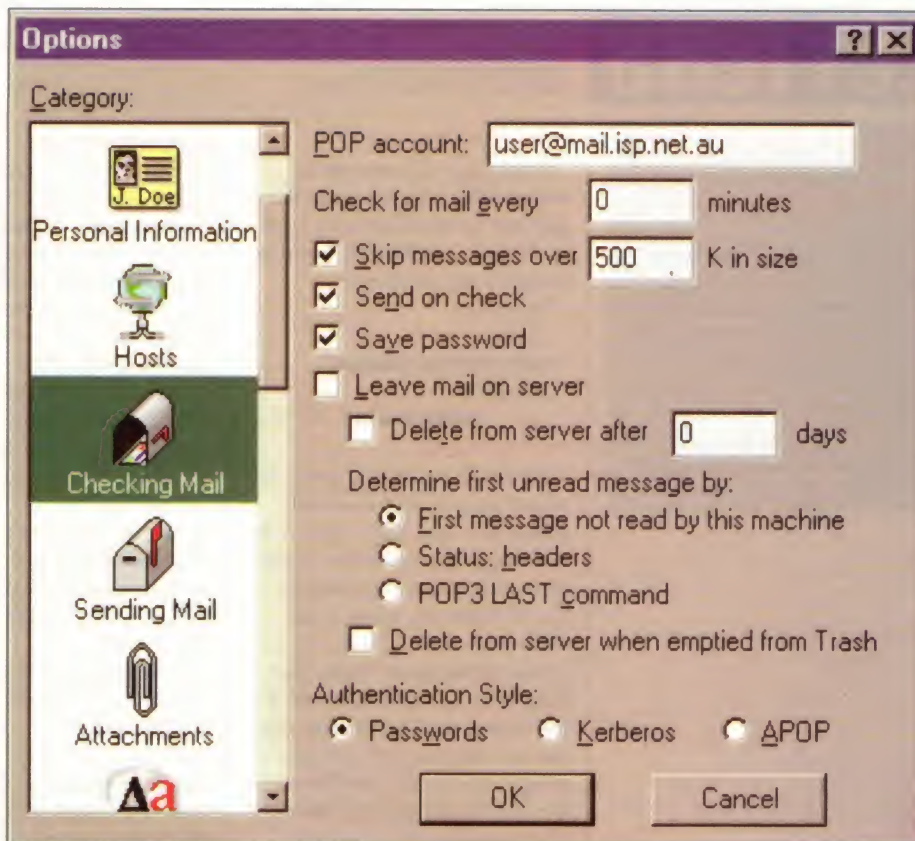
ing their arrival (you can't miss it), and a message will flash in your task bar (in Windows '95). Other flashing alerts will warn you when you have new ICQ mail (different from your normal e-mail), or when a user is attempting to contact you for a chat.

ICQ also has an address book which brings together the users you have added to your list. You can find out a little more about your ICQ buddies, from their real name and age to their e-mail address or web site (if supplied), perhaps most importantly the local time in their neck of the woods! This menu also allows you to add or remove users from your ICQ profile, and the ability to change between user profiles is quick and easy for those in an environment where more than one person is using the single computer to access the internet. You can also change your security and privacy settings in this menu, allowing you to easily change your password, or whether you are required to approve various users before you appear on their contact list.

The final menu corresponds to the user list. By right clicking on a friends name, you can then choose whether you want to chat to this person, send them a file or perhaps play one of the ICQ friendly games with them (see the Mirabilis website for more information on compatible games). You can also call up a users details or remove them from your contact list from this menu. If you can recall your UIN and password, you can connect from a friends internet connection by going to Current User - Log Another User. By entering their details in the space provided it will effectively restore their defaults as if it were their own computer.

How far has the word spread?

A question I asked myself when I first discovered ICQ (always the sceptic), but that was



(top) the skipmail function
 (middle) progress of a file being sent
 (bottom) alerting a user to ICQ

quashed one evening mid-game at The Zone. After asking my challenger if they used ICQ, the answer came back bluntly "Sure, don't you???". I could not get an accurate estimate of the current number of ICQ users, let's put it at "millions and growing rapidly". If you don't know where to look for people to contact on ICQ, then head to the Mirabilis website where they have hundreds of lists of people using ICQ by categories. There are lists of people who like music, participate in sports, use various kinds of software, or lists of people linking like-professions. If there is no user-list for a particular hobby or interest

you can start the ball rolling and create a new list. The website will lead you in the right direction to create a new user directory, and Mirabilis encourage users to do so.

In many ways ICQ is just in its infant stages. The website has a section devoted to ICQ compatible software, and alternative NetMeeting, Vchat and foreign language versions of ICQ are already available.

ICQ doesn't just solve the perennial question for people wanting to locate friends on the internet, but makes services like real-time chat and online gaming very straightforward for people who might have thought that these concepts are too daunting to approach. From experience many of us know that sending files to one another can be very difficult using e-mail, and a program such as ICQ could eliminate these problems.

Daniel Cohen (daniel@internetguy.com.au or UIN 2178568)

Letter of the month! Win a subscription!

Each month we'll choose a letter that we think is THE BEST that month. Not the funniest (although we reserve the right to hand out a freebie if a letter makes us laugh HARD), but the most intelligent, the most incisive, the most informed. The winner gets a

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8-bit Brilliance

Please pass on my thanks to Ashton Mills for his piece on the good old Commodore 64 in issue 15. Brilliant, just brilliant, it almost brought a tear to my eye.

Thank you.

Cheers

Cameron Fitze, internet

Almost?!!

2-Bits worth

After having read your article in August 1997 issue I was mildly dismayed to find a few errors in it and a significant omission. In particular Elite did not originate on the ZX Spectrum, it was in fact the second machine to receive a version of the game. It was originally coded for the BBC Model B and among the 8 bit versions this was arguably the best version of the game (although the C64 version did feature colour in the main screen and tribbles as improvements it also was a slower version of the game). Secondly, Sentinel was also a BBC B game originally, coded by Geoff Crammond. While it may be arguable that these games achieved their fame on the

C64, although that is something that is dubious to argue, it is something of a shame not to note their respective origins. Finally why was the BBC Model B not given honourable mention alongside the ZX Spectrum and Commodore 64? The Acorn machine gave us several outstanding games and certainly deserves more than the cursory one line mention your article devotes to it in passing. It is also ironic to note that the one company that made one of the more prominent 8 bit machines around and is still producing machines, is also the company that was neglected to be mentioned.

To try and redress this balance a little here are my picks for the top five BBC games :-

Elite - As your article mentioned, a space trading game. Originating from the Model B this version was the standard by which the others were measured and somehow they never quite matched the playability of the BBC version.

Sentinel - Excellent and unusual game, again largely as mentioned in the article. Again, A BBC Model B first and also noteworthy for having been coded by Geoff Crammond.

Revs - Another Geoff Crammond game, a Formula 1 racing simulator featuring realistic physics model (the car could be made to fly in a certain S-bend), rear vision mirrors, computer opponents and a customisable car. Coded for the BBC B I am unsure if it ever made the leap to other machines but this marked the start of Geoff Crammond's work in racing simulators.

Exile - A classic arcade adventure game that required both quick reflexes and puzzle solving skills. Packed into a large world in which one had to interact with robots, grenades, native lifeforms (Imps, birds, bees, fish, worms etc...), trapped crew members, gun turrets, doors, Triax himself, water, fire and wind. For machines equipped with sideways RAM the game even featured digitised sound and an expanded playing view around the astronaut. Copied to machines like the Amiga it never quite retained the same feeling of pushing the machine to the limits of it's capabilities.

Thrust - An excellent implementation of a simple game the simply kept you coming back for

more. A spaceship had to be piloted from the surface down into an increasingly complex series of tunnels combating gravity, limited fuel, gun turrets and doors that had to be opened. Your only aids were a gun, a shield that drained fuel while in use and quick reflexes. To make matters worse the pod you had to rescue was held by tractor beam from your ship and turned you into a pendulum.

Of course, like with the ZX Spectrum and the C64, this list just scratches the surface.

And on the emulation side several emulators exist. Acorn's own G5Host, now not directly supported but still useable on their latest machines, Warm Silence Software's commercial effort for Acorn machines as well as a range of emulators available for a host of systems including Unix/XWindows, DOS, Windows, Amiga and Macintosh machines. To find out about them, and for other BBC related resources, visit The BBC Lives! At

<http://www.nvg.unit.no/bbc/>

Phillip

New Zealand

LETTER OF THE MONTH

NZ madness

The world of games... ahh. It is a marvellous place forever improving itself. Every new game I see is expanding in greatness. There are the pleasant fantasy like games, the games for when you're angry like Quake and Hexen, humorous games, erotic games... the list goes on and on. None of the games I play a lot would I let anyone play who might take them seriously. These people are about eleven and younger. The erotic games, such as Virtual Valerie, should definitely be 18+. But into this dream world, which keeps youngsters off drugs for one, a terrible monster roams and wildly destroys some of the greatest games of all. The beasts name is censorship.

I live in New Zealand and cannot believe what is happening. Your article in Issue 15, August 1997 shocked me more than any game ever has. How can the government take away our rights? We live with a rule here in good old "democratic" NZ now: "You are free to say what you like, as long as we approve of it". Now we can only choose games that the govt allows us to. I cannot stress my distress at this violation of our rights.

Daniel "Dan Snacks" Rutledge
Hamilton, NZ
internet

It's a world gone mad Dan. We all have faith that sanity will someday be restored to the situation. Problem is, it's looking like it'll take many years for the cogs of bureaucracy to turn. Politicians simply don't rate this as an issue, so it's forever being shoved aside. Let them know how you feel readers! Don't write to the OFLC, they just police the act, instead write to your local member and let them know how stupid and shortsighted they are being. If they couldn't give a damn about your rights, try reminding them that gamers vote and there's a lot of us out here.

We owe you a prize Dan, but we haven't got an address and the email you gave us just doesn't work. Get in touch.

How to score

I have come up with an equation to determine an individual's reaction to a new game which is considered to be an improvement on the genre (ie - Quake and 3D shoot 'em ups). Here it is:

- (new game's playability x new game's technological advancements) - (Individual's residence to change x overall popularity of genre's best game).
- Each factor in the equation should be rated out of ten. To the first bracket, add any of the following variables:
- Multiplayer + 1
- If the game is in the player's favourite genre +3
- To the second bracket, add any of the following variables:
- +4 if the genre's best game is a personal favourite
- +2 if the genre's best game is considered widely as one of the greatest games made (ie. Civ II)

A minus score indicates that the new game will not receive a favourable reaction initially from the individual, the lower score the less favourable the reaction will be.

A positive score indicates that the

new game will receive a favourable reaction initially from the individual, the higher the score the more favourable the reaction will be.

A score of zero and the individual should be shot for indecisiveness.

I call this the UIE score.
(Unusually Irrelevant Equation). I believe in this very seriously.

Well, no... Actually, I don't. It's all rather pointless and gratuitously boring, and you shouldn't believe a word of it. Keep up the great work Monsieurs PowerPlay. Love it all. Except the bad parts. No, hang on, love those too. Lovely deception so you all appear to be human.

By the way, as a postscript, an I the only individual on this lonely planet who loves both Duke Nukem 3D and Quake as equal brothers in arms?

Yours sincerely

Duncan Ley, Dickson ACT

Another perfectly sane PowerPlay reader...

I agree

I'd like to thank Rod Campbell in issue #15 for telling everybody about Quake. He really uses his common sense. To tell the truth I don't think any Quake versions have ugly graphics, it was like that with my old magazine I used to collect. At first I really liked reading it, but later on the letters that people sent in were all teasing or blaming someone about their letters, most of them weren't even about computer games (it was a computer magazine).

So I ended up writing a big, long letter to them and then someday later, I discovered PC PowerPlay.

PC PowerPlay I get a lot out of, especially issue #12 and #13.

To get to the point, people that have thoughts that might hurt other people would be best off to keep them out, just in case a fisticuffs with pens starts. Then PC PowerPlay letters would be all positive, not saying that most of them aren't.

Yeah, really if you think about it, a game is a game and if you don't like it don't worry about it and go worry about another game that might interest you, instead of criticising people because they like games that you might hate. So I'd like to say to Rod, "you're on the right track!".

Daniel Peters

Laidley, QLD

Why can't we all get along?

FREAK OF THE MONTH



Grazza's homemade steering wheel:

The Story

As a destroyer of more than a dozen joysticks, including a Thrustmaster T1 & T2, I figured there had to be a better & cheaper computer driving wheel. After being the sucker paying for poxy plastic peripherals that broke after one little release of gaming aggravation, I knew that I needed a stronger wheel. Being a Mechanical Engineer and from the many repairs I had performed on my Thrustmaster T1 & T2 so many times I knew that the basic principles behind the wheel were simple.

My mate Luke downloaded some info from the net on a wheel some bloke in the States had made, which again was very similar to the Thrustmaster design using ocky straps as your springs. I saw the arrangement of the main shaft and spring system as being the key to a strong and controllable wheel and I drew a few sketches figuring out how to do this.

It all comes down to what you have in the garage! One of my favourite toys is my 3 Phase 250 amp MIG welder which comes in handy for fixing most everything from the car exhaust to the neighbour's cat, heh heh heh (anyone out there still wondering why he's Freak Of The Month? Ed.). Having just re built a Holden HJ ute, I had a heap of left over bits and pieces. So a genuine HJ steering shaft, shortened and reversed, sitting snugly inside the genuine HJ steering wheel top racer and supported by a genuine HJ front tapered wheel bearing at the base became the back bone. Some one inch steel strap bent up and then welded together formed a frame. A large washer I rescued from beneath the power pole out the front of the house after the electricity people had had a play, became the force plate that the ocky straps revolve around. By deliberately bending the frame in such a way that it permanently has spring, it could force the tapered bearing to react to the loads imposed in those moments of frustration. A \$20 leather wheel cover in on the 13 inch wheel with a home made centre hob, bolted directly to the top of the steering shaft. The whole thing was constructed so that it could be easily dismantled for repairs or modifications.

All of this goes straight down to a simple dash potentiometer. After experimenting with a few different pots of varying ohms, I have settled on a \$1.00 Dick Smith special. They work really well for about three months then you whip it off and bolt on a new one and its like a fresh set of tires, yea ha!! Another complaint I always had with the Thrustmasters was that the gear stick on the side took your concentration away from the racing and I longed for buttons on the wheel. Hence they were incorporated into the design. Next biggest problem has been poor quality ocky straps. A dodgy one will last a matter of hours, a good one will last six months! Its first failure however, was when the weight lifter brother in law smashed the wheel hard up against the stop, ripping the 3mm stop out of the shaft. So beefing up of the stopping mechanism was performed.

The larger diameter wheel gives really good control but you need to be able to react quick. I have had a number of friends asking me to build them one of these but I am always working on the new one. The new one is even simpler yet and will do away with the ocky straps, opting for offset steel springs attached to still steel shaft, running in a teflon sleeve. I did start to make a cover for it but I like the brutal look, plus it makes it easier to work under the bonnet.

Freak File:

Graeme "Grazza" Hope

Age: 32

Profession: Mechanical Engineer

Likes: 3Dfx Cards, 200 MMX's, 21 Inch Monitors

Dislikes: 2D video cards, DX4-100's, 14 Inch Monitors, cleaning my nose

Favourite sport: Touring Cars

Favourite food: Chocky & Chips

Favourite drink: Coca Cola

Favourite TV: Optus Sports, Motor Racing

Favourite music: Mechwarrior Merc Sound Track, Cyberstorm Soundtrack

Top three favourite games of all time:

Warcraft II

NFS

GP2

Favourite multiplayer game:

Network RallyQ

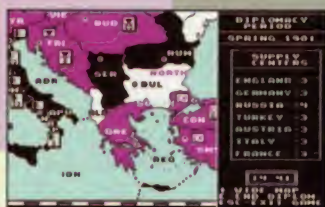


Armour all (for wheel) Coke The Steering Wheel

Behold: PowerPlay readers. That's Grazza at the front, one hand on his pride and joy. In the background is "Filthy" Phil, one of those mates that kind of visit forever.

• Be a legend! Send your FOTM photo, a screenshot of your Win 95 desktop and a freaky rant.

Diplomacy



Once upon a time wars were fought with words. They could start and end battles, foster growth or mercilessly devastate, and conquer both minds and continents. Words are power, not armies nor swords nor technology nor numbers can stand in their way. And the art of manipulation through words is diplomacy.

Gamewise, no single game has truly represented this art as the board game of the same name. Rather like Chess, the board game of Diplomacy has few rules, a limited map and endless possibilities. Through careful gameplay design, the game forces players to use the art of diplomacy to succeed.

The computer version appeared on the scene so long ago that there's no point in trying to name some year in the ancient beginnings of PCdom. Suffice to say, the game runs in CGA — yep, that inconceivable three colour glory that our ancestors had to put up with before some handy techie people invented EGA and gave us a whopping 16 colours to drool over. In fact, this game is so old it's probably the oldest game to appear in Flashback so far.

Using Diplomacy

Was it fun? Darn right it was. It's STILL fun. Games that can stand this test of the ages must surely be doing something right. To understand Diplomacy here's a brief run-

down of the rules:

It's Europe, 1914. The map is divided into countries and regions covering everyone important from England to Russia. Players choose a country to command and receive three units

to place in their capital cities, except for Russia which gets four (due to the size of area that must be defended). There are only two unit types: armies and fleets. Armies move on land, attack on land and can be shipped across seas by fleets. Fleets move on seas, attack on sea and attack on coastal lands. Only one unit can occupy a country, continent or map location at any one time.

Here's the fun part. Players must win by eliminating all other players or capturing a set number of capital cities. How does one conquer a neighboring country? Move an army into it and occupy it. Of course, there's a large chance the country is already occupied by the original owners, and they're unlikely to let you in. And so enters the beautiful simplicity of the fighting rules in Diplomacy — if one unit attacks a country with an enemy unit in it, the equation is one unit

versus one unit, resulting in a standoff — nobody moves. So how do you force them out? Simple, ensure you have another of your units bordering both the country that your attacking unit is moving from and the country it is trying to move into, and order it to support your units move. The equation: two versus one, and your unit succeeds in entering the country, forcing the enemy unit to retreat.

Of course, if the other player has a unit bordering just the country being attacked, he can order it to support the defending unit, causing the equation to equal two versus two and resulting in a standoff. How to get around this? Attack three versus two, or cut some enemy support by attacking those countries attempting to support the defending country. It's all about strategy. So where does diplomacy come in?

Remember you start with three units. Given the above rules, it's easy to see that standoffs are going to be terribly common — unless you get some outside help, say another player helping one of your units to attack another player's country. But why would they want to help you? Do you promise help in return? Do they trust you will keep to your word? Do you trust

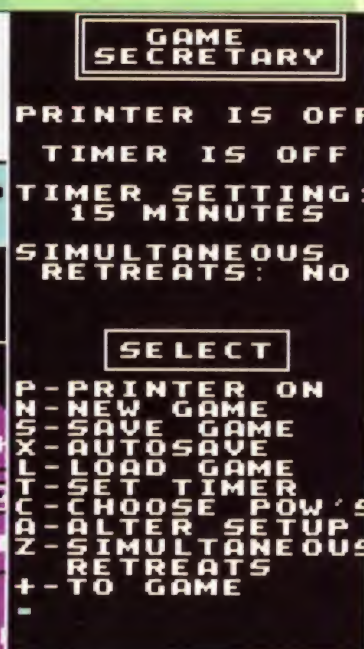
their word? What's stopping them from taking advantage of the knowledge of your plans and backstabbing you? Ahh... Diplomacy is a game that can make enemies from the best of friends.

The board game sees players writing their orders on paper and passing them to the next player, to be implemented simultaneously at the end of the game turn. In the computer version, all movement and rule handling is handled by the computer, making gameplay much faster and ruling out any possibility of rule questioning.

Although the PC game is much fun, the now ageing CGA graphics and less-interactive gameplay tend to see the board game (with its full colour map) being more popular. Still, if you can get a hold of this game do so, it's bound to be dirt cheap and you'll find it an incredibly addictive game, assuming you have enough friends you can mercilessly backstab, er, I mean form honorable treaties with.

Ashton Mills

With just 1 or 2 military units in each country, Diplomacy has more in common with chess than other strategy games



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